



15TH SEAMEO INNOTECH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
THRIVING IN THE MARGINS
Inclusive Education Re-imagined

March 6-8, 2018 | Philippines

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS



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How can we grow a learning community that welcomes everyone?

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SEAMEO INNOTECH convenes its International Conference every two years in response to the emerging education needs of the region. The Conference, first held in 1986, continues to serve as a platform for education stakeholders to discuss education concerns and collaborate for possible solutions.

In line with the Center's vision to provide a better future for every learner in Southeast Asia, the conference focused on the theme of inclusive quality education. This year's conference is one of the many programs and initiatives undertaken by the Center to modestly contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Inclusive Quality Education and the SEAMEO Priority Area 2 on addressing barriers to inclusion and access to basic learning opportunities through innovations in education delivery and management. The conference adopted the title, “Thriving in the Margins: Inclusive Education Re-imagined.”

This year's conference used the power of stories to explore inclusive education from the perspective of learners who are traditionally unseen, unheard, and underserved. Selected compelling stories of people thriving in the fringes of mainstream society were gathered and presented during the event. Said stories served as triggers for the participants to re-think and reflect on the current and good practices in implementing inclusive teaching and learning strategies in their individual contexts and realities. Discussions about the Four Pillars of Balanced and Inclusive Education by the Education Relief Foundation (ERF) provided framework for concurrent learning conversations which were facilitated using modified Open Space Technology (OST). Participants were encouraged to share and exchange ideas on education-related issues and concerns, to answer the big question: “How can we grow a learning community that welcomes everyone?”



IN FIGURES

267



267 participants from 16 countries attended the conference

25



25 inspiring stories on inclusive education were compiled and displayed as part of the conference exhibits.

9



9 storytellers encouraged and sparked passion for balanced and inclusive education.

3



3 storyweavers made sense of the stories and discussions for the duration of the conference.

82



82 learning conversations emerged from the three days of storytelling and discussions on inclusive education.

5



5 priority areas on inclusive education were identified from the 82 reports.



“

PROCEEDINGS

”

Day 1 | March 6

Opening Program

The conference formally opened with the Entrance of Colors, followed by the Philippine National Anthem.

The opening program was hosted by Ms. Monique Adalem from the Learning Management Office of SEAMEO INNOTECH. She welcomed the audience and thanked everyone for joining the conference. She then acknowledged the help of the conference’s co-organizers (Philippine Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Education Relief Foundation, and Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education), sponsors (Resorts World Manila, Local Government of Quezon City, Private Education Assistance Committee, The HEAD Foundation, Government Service Insurance System, Lopez Group Foundation, and Servicio Filipino, Inc.), and supporter (Philippine Network for Inclusive Education).

Welcome Remarks

Dr. Ramon C. Bacani

Director, SEAMEO INNOTECH

Dr. Ramon C. Bacani, Center Director of SEAMEO INNOTECH, welcomed the participants to the 15th SEAMEO INNOTECH International Conference, “Thriving in the Margins: Inclusive Education Re-imagined.”

He started by acknowledging the presence of the esteemed guests and the representatives of the conference’s co-organizers. He warmly welcomed everyone present in the conference and thanked them for joining. Dr. Bacani gratefully mentioned that the number of participants exceeded the organizer’s target number.

As inclusive education is gaining a lot of interest recently, Dr. Bacani mentioned that this conference is a modest contribution of the Center in achieving the **Sustainable Development Goal 4: Inclusive Quality Education**. He also added that the conference is aligned with **SEAMEO’s 7 Priority Areas**, particularly on addressing barriers to inclusion.

Dr. Bacani pointed out that for the 3-day Conference, participants will be able to listen to compelling stories on inclusive education. These stories were meant to trigger the discussions during the breakout sessions. He hoped that the stories and discussions will help the participants in re-imagining inclusive education in their respective areas, to ensure a better future for every learner in the region and beyond.

SEAMEO INNOTECH
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PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH



ERF President Sheikh Manssour Bin Mussallam explained the Four Pillars of Balanced and Inclusive Education in his keynote speech. He emphasized the need to tackle inclusive education in terms of access, social policies, curricula and content, and pedagogy.

Keynote Speech

Sheikh Manssour Bin Mussallam

President, Education Relief Foundation (ERF)

Sheikh Manssour Bin Mussallam, President of the Education Relief Foundation (ERF), greeted the conference organizers, as well as the participants and dignitaries.

He said that the theme, **Thriving in the Margins: Inclusive Education Re-imagined**, is quite ambitious. It challenges us to momentarily set aside our common thinking, and dares us to look beyond the future of “what could have” and “what should have”.

He cited Albert Camus’ acceptance speech for his Noble Prize for Literature, where he believes that each generation thinks it is bound to remake the world. He said that, more than remaking the world, we have to make sure that the world does not “unmake” itself. The task at hand, compared to that of 60 years ago, is far more complex and urgent; making sure that the world does not “unmake” itself, while at the same time “remaking” it.

He pointed out that our societies are no longer sustainable—a planetary titanic. Our presence in this conference means that we have recognized this situation, that education and culture will allow people to elevate themselves towards progress. He said that there are no better ways in remaking the world than making education more inclusive.

This task cannot be undertaken by just one government, organization, or generation; it is a concerted, collaborative, collective, and sustainable effort from all concerned. He pointed out that the meaning of “inclusive education” varies for different groups of people.

In order to re-imagine inclusive education, Sheikh Manssour said that we should have the courage to unlink the system that made the world in this structure, that we should have courage to critique the existing power dynamics. He emphasized the need to tackle inclusive education in terms of access, social policies, curricular content, and pedagogy.

There is a need to talk about access, because there is no inclusion when there is no protection of the right nor the means to gain an education. There is a need to talk about holistic, humanistic, and progressive social policies because education and policies in education cannot be discussed separately. Perpetual novelty, curricula content, and pedagogy should be discussed to avoid alienating learners.

With these in mind, the ERF aims to promote a balanced and inclusive education through its advocacy of the Four Pillars of Balanced and Inclusive Education—intraculturalism, transdisciplinarity, dialecticism, and contextuality. He differentiated interculturalism from intraculturalism; interculturalism being respect and understanding of other cultures, while intraculturalism is a conversation within one and the same culture, a deep cultural introspection where you try to understand how your history contributes to the culture of others and how their history affected your own culture.

Transdisciplinarity is transcending beyond the gaps of the different disciplines. It is allowing students to think and solve problems through different views and approaches.

Dialecticism is the need for learners to be more resourceful than passively acquiring knowledge from their teachers. He pointed out that in this age of technology, it is crucial that students be able to select and process information that is relevant and valuable.

Contextuality is tailoring the values and skills expected from the learners to their needs. It is contextualizing education to the realities of the country, their national priority, and individual aspirations.

These Four Pillars of Balanced and Inclusive Education, according to Sheikh Manssour, would allow us to imagine and re-imagine, think and re-think the concept of Inclusive Education.

He ended his speech hoping that this conference be a venue for more collaborations and discussions on advancing inclusive education for all.



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH

DepEd Secretary Leonor Magtolis-Briones expressed her pleasure to witness a lot of people pushing for inclusion in education.

Message

Hon. Leonor Magtolis Briones

Secretary, Philippine Department of Education

Sec. Leonor Magtolis Briones warmly greeted the conference guests and participants. She said that she feels very happy seeing many people interested in inclusive education and participating in such conference.

Sec. Briones shared the recent proposed program of the Department for the Indigenous Peoples (IP) in the Mindanao region. She expressed her hopes for its integration with the nationwide program, given that there are also a lot of IPs enrolled in public schools all over the country. Such projects could make education truly inclusive for the different roots of Filipino. She said that this Conference is of great interest as exchanging of thoughts and advocacy would be very useful for everyone attending the event.

She proudly said that the Philippines, as stated in the Constitution, is mandated to provide quality education to every child. Every learner, from different cultures and roots, should have access to quality education.

15th International Conference

Sec. Briones shared her own story of thriving in the margins. When she was three years old, her mother—a public school teacher—would gather children and teach them how to read and write amidst the ongoing World War. More than the sound of guns and bombs, children focused their attention on learning.

She also shared her Martial Law experience, where she and her husband fled and hid from one place to another. Once, they lived as farmers and found the simple provincial life better than their previous life in the city. However, they realized that their son should not grow up not knowing the rest of the world. They want their child to learn how to choose and decide for himself. It was then when they decided to go back to the city, for the benefit of their child.

Sec. Briones said that many of those who advocate for opportunities for those in the margins have similar stories and experiences. She emphasized that all children should be given the opportunity to make a choice for themselves. And education will give them that choice—education is about giving our children the opportunity to make a choice.

She then mentioned the recent reforms that was put into place in the country, such as the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum, which adds two more years in the formal education system and gives more options for learners, and the expansion of the Alternative Learning System (ALS). She highlighted that whatever opportunities given to learners in the formal school should also be given to those in ALS. Sec. Briones said that it is important for them to be fair with all learners, as well as with the parents and teachers.

Sec. Briones also shared a story of a teacher from an indigenous group nominated for the 2018 Global Teacher Prize by the Varkey Foundation. His story is an excellent example of giving opportunities to those in the margins. She acknowledged that there are still a lot of learners in the margins. She hopes that the same opportunities could be given to them, as education makes choices possible.

Giving of Tokens and Group Photo

Dr. Ramon C. Bacani gave tokens of appreciation to Sheikh Manssour Bin Mussallam and Sec. Leonor Magtolis-Briones for their inspiring messages and participation in the conference. A group photo with all the participants was taken afterwards to commemorate the Conference's opening ceremony.

Opening the Circle

Ms. Michelle Sarabillo, Senior Associate from SEAMEO INNOTECH Learning Management Office, facilitated the Open Space session. Welcoming the participants to the circle, she proudly announced that more than 200 participants representing 16 countries are part of the circle to discuss inclusive education. To start the session on a lighter note, she asked the participants to look around and greet the other participants in the circle. She emphasized that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity, where the exact same people will gather in such event.

Ms. Sarabillo introduced the conference theme, **Thriving in the Margins: Inclusive Education Re-imagined**, and its process to the participants.

The 3-day conference will make use of stories and a modified Open Space Technology (OST) to explore issues in inclusive quality education. Throughout the conference, the participants will try to answer the big question, “**How can we grow a learning community that welcomes everyone?**”

The conference will use the power of stories to set the tone and trigger discussions. These are stories of individuals who have transitioned from rejection to acceptance. Ms. Sarabillo emphasized that people may tend to forget facts, but stories will always be remembered. With that, she introduced the first three storytellers of the conference.



Ms. Michelle Sarabillo explained the theme and methodology of the conference. She then asked the big question, “How can we grow a learning community that welcomes everyone?”



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PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH

The inspiring storytellers for the first day of the conference are: (L-R) Ms. Shilpa Anthony Raj, Mr. Kaloy Manlupig, and Dr. Rex Bernardo.

Stories on Inclusive Education

THE ELEPHANT CHASER'S DAUGHTER

Ms. Shilpa Anthony Raj

Born in a social underclass in India, Ms. Shilpa Anthony Raj deviated from the norms and went under a transformative education and modern upbringing through Shanti Bhavan—a free boarding school that provides poor children with education and necessities. She is now a counsellor, teacher, author, and an advocate for quality education for the poor.

Ms. Shilpa Anthony Raj set her story through a trailer for *Daughters of Destiny*—a four-episode documentary about five children who were educated through Shanti Bhavan. Ms. Raj is one of the children featured in the said documentary.

Ms. Raj narrated the story of how she was selected to enter the school, the way the school was run, and how it has changed her life.

She was only 4 years old when she entered the residential school, Shanti Bhavan. Most of the children selected and brought there came from abusive and violent environments. The founders thought that the children's only escape from that kind of environment is by housing them in the school.

Ms. Raj felt lucky to be selected to study in Shanti Bhavan. She was given the chance to grow up in an environment where boys and girls are given equal opportunities—where every child is encouraged to go after their dream. She said it is highly different from her hometown, where women are expected to serve men and girls are not allowed to study.

She said she felt bad for her siblings who did not have the same opportunity as she had. It was once a difficult situation at home as her siblings did not understand her situation. It was then when she realized she has a bigger purpose in life—to help other children born in poor families to have the same opportunity as she did.

Shanti Bhavan has been with her from her 1st day of school to her 1st day at work. It has been her safe space ever since. The school has led a societal revolution where kids from the lower castes were given the opportunity to learn and lead the society. It has encouraged its graduates who were once in the margins and the poorest of the poor to also help children in need who were once like them.

[READ STORY ON PAGE 250](#)

THE HOME WHERE PEACE BEGINS

Mr. Kaloy Manlupig

A painful episode gave Mr. Charlito “Kaloy” Manlupig an inspiration to put up Balay Mindanaw, together with a few of his valued friends. It is an organization that supports the land rights of the farmers. From a house that volunteers built, it is now a home of volunteers who wanted to transform Mindanao towards equity, development, and peace.

Mr. Kaloy Manlupig's story started around 20 years ago when he was working as the Regional Director of the Department of Agrarian Reform in Mindanao, baseless complaints were filed against him, forcing him to step down from his position.

After years of doing development work, the crisis became an inspiration when he and his friends envisioned a new journey in the form of Balay Mindanaw, an organization that supports farmers in fighting for their lands.

Balay Mindanaw educated farmers of their rights and responsibilities. They held agrarian reform information campaign, seminars, and workshops, and encouraged farmers to claim their rights assertively and persistently. Their efforts soon evolved to training farmers as paralegals.

Aside from this, they also conducted projects to transform the minds of the soldiers. The Project OP Kors! (Operation Peace Course) educate communities, local government units, indigenous peoples, and members of the army and police. The project has produced more than a thousand graduates since its formation.

He said that Balay Mindanaw was once a house that volunteers built, now it is a home for volunteers. With more volunteers from different countries, religions, and cultures, they continue to grow and learn.

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LIMITLESS POSSIBILITIES BEYOND MY PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

Dr. Rex Bernardo

Dr. Rex Bernardo was only five when he was diagnosed with polio—he was not sent to school until he was 19. Now, he is one of the founding members of the Philippine Network for Inclusive Education.

Diagnosed early with orthopedic impairment, Dr. Rex Bernardo can only use his left arm. He recalled his experience in kindergarten when he was excited to go to school but was mocked and ridiculed by his schoolmates due to his disability. This caused him to stop going to school. Instead, he was homeschooled and took alternative learning courses. At the age of seven, he learned how to read from his aunt who discovered his passion and talent for writing. He wrote articles and comic stories for Liwayway Magazine at that time. He realized that with perseverance and passion for learning, one's opportunities are limitless even for persons with disabilities (PWD).

At nineteen, his parents eventually allowed him to attend a formal school and enter college. He considered that the happiest moment of his life. He was able to pass the Alternative Learning System (ALS) equivalency tests of the DepEd. He earned a degree in Psychology with flying colors from Trinity College of Quezon City, which was the one of the few colleges that accepted learners with orthopedic disability at that time.

Currently an adviser for the Philippine Network for Inclusive Education (PNIE), he learned that acceptance and togetherness are key factors in making education inclusive and removing barriers to quality education. He noted that it is important for learners with disabilities to get support from parents, family and support groups like PNIE. Schools must exert extra efforts to create and promote an inclusive learning culture inside the classroom. He concluded his story by thanking his wife and all those who supported his education despite his disability. He asked everyone to look beyond a person’s disability and focus on that person’s multitude of talents and potentials.

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Agenda-Setting

Ms. Michelle Sarabillo introduced the methodology for the conference, Open Space Technology (OST), explaining that the concept originated with the thought that real conversations and learning happen during coffee breaks.

She walked the participants through the principles of Open Space: (1) whoever comes is the right person, (2) whatever happens is the only thing that could have, (3) whenever it starts is the right time, (4) when it’s over, it’s over, and (5) wherever it is, is the right place.

OST’s only law—called the “law of two feet”—maintains that every individual has two feet, and must be prepared to use them. If you find yourself not contributing or not learning in a group, use your two feet to go somewhere else.



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH

The participants wrote and proposed their agendas on inclusivee education.

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Ms. Sarabillo also introduced the concept of “bumblebees” and “butterflies”: bumblebees fly from group to group cross-pollinating discussions while butterflies are people who take a break from sessions to have casual conversations. She reminded that everyone is important and could contribute a lot to the group.

She also presented the sticky wall and the resource center. The participants are free to get materials from the resource center to write their proposed agenda, which will be posted on the sticky wall. Whoever wants to champion an agenda could convene is or her own group at their preferred time and place.

She then introduced the big question, “How can we grow a learning community that welcomes everyone?” With the big question in mind, she encouraged the participants to start writing and proposing their agenda.

Learning Conversations

The participants proceeded to convene their own sessions to discuss their agenda in inclusive education. Complete documentation of all the break-out sessions or learning conversations can be found on the next section, under **Session Reports**.

Story Weaving

After the two learning conversations on the first day, Ms. Mitch introduced the story weaver for the day, Ms. Cecilia Soriano, Programmes and Operations Coordinator of the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE).

She began by analyzing and discussing the conference theme. “Thriving in the Margins,” she pointed out that upon hearing “margins” one would immediately think of them as helpless, someone who needs assistance. But in this conference, it can be clearly observed that each one is helping themselves.

On inclusive education, she pointed out the inclusivity that was felt throughout the day, from the stories heard in the morning to the stories shared by each participant in the learning conversations. It was an exchange and sharing of diverse learning cultures.

She recalled Sec. Briones’ vision of providing every learner the opportunity to make a choice through education. She said that this has been discussed in one of the learning conversations she attended which highlighted the importance of leadership with a heart.



After the first two learning conversations, Ms. Cecilia Soriano from ASPBAE (top right) wove the stories and discussions for the day.

Ms. Soriano said that the discussions in the afternoon have been very colorful—ranging from personal stories, to community stories, and organizational stories. She said that everyone in the room are “shodinis” (seekers)—seekers and leaders in education and development. She said that a lot has been shared and a lot more would be shared in the following days, pondering on how we can grow a thriving and inclusive learning community.

Evening News

Ms. Michelle Sarabillo informed the participants of the schedule for the following day.

She also introduced the 3A wall where participants are encouraged to write what has been Affirmed, Altered and Added in their concept of Inclusive Education.

She also thanked the conference co-organizers, sponsors, and supporters, and invited the participants to like and follow the conference social media accounts and use the hashtag #inclusivEDnarratives in their posts.

Day 2 | March 7

Morning News

Ms. Michelle Sarabillo welcomed the participants back to the circle. She commended the participants for producing 32 agendas in two hours during the learning conversations the previous day.

She reminded everyone that there will be three stories and five learning conversations scheduled for the day. To formally begin the day, she introduced the three storytellers.

Stories on Inclusive Education

HEALING AND ADVOCACY THROUGH EDUCATION

Ms. Prescilla Tulipat

A counsellor, educator, and women's advocate, Ms. Prescilla Tulipat transformed her pain and trauma to courage and healing. Through her women and development work, she hopes each person is able to overcome the harshness of life and see them smiling once again.

Ms. Prescilla Tulipat's story of courage and healing began in a classroom twenty years ago. When they were asked in a post-graduate class about their lowest point in life, her memories of a childhood trauma resurfaced: at five years old, she experienced incest. When she opened up about this experience, she felt like it was one of her best decisions; it was then when she started to have courage to confront and understand her trauma.

For 10 years now, she has been working at the University of the Philippines as a guidance counsellor to help students cope with their traumatic experiences, particularly on sexual abuse. From being a survivor, she has thrived to be a healer, a service provider to people who had similar experiences.

When there was no Crisis Center in the University yet, she and her classmates formed a group where they discuss and open up about their traumatic experiences. Along with the theories, they open up and process the emotions they felt. She said that engaging with emotions is an integral part of a thriving learning environment; one cannot think properly when the trauma inside you is attacking and holding you back.

She thinks that the academic setting can be very inclusive and transformative when the teacher believes in you as a learner, as a person who can meaningfully



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The participants were touched by the stories of (L-R) Ms. Prescilla Tulipat, Mr. Ben Abadiano, and Bai Rohaniza Sumndad-Usman.

contribute insights and learning. She shared that in her classes, she never felt judged and it made her value the experience of sharing, reflecting, and being a part of a supportive and sensitive group. She encouraged teachers and school heads in the audience to give this kind of environment to their students.

She said that for development to be meaningful, it has to touch one’s life economically, psychologically, spiritually, and in other aspects of their humanity.

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TILLING THE SEEDBED: CO-CREATING PATHWAYS TO IP EDUCATION
Mr. Ben Abadiano

Mr. Benjamin Abadiano is the first Filipino to win the Ramon Magsaysay Emergent Leadership Award in 2004 for establishing the Tugdaan Center for Mangyans, an education and development institution managed by Mangyan leaders.

Mr. Ben Abadiano began by saying that this story is a testimony of power in powerlessness. Indigenous Peoples (IP), who are usually powerless, have the power to change someone’s life, just like his.

It was during his second year in college when he had the chance to interact and live with the Manobos in Bukidnon. At that time, he did not have any knowledge about IPs. He realized that, similar with any other religion, the IPs also have their own set of values that could teach us valuable things in life. It was after that 19-day immersion with the IPs when Ben decided to dedicate his life in working with and for the IPs.

He met the Mangyans in another immersion activity where he eventually stayed and volunteered in the community for 9 years—which, according to him, were the best years of his life. They established a community school deeply rooted in the Mangyan culture; their curriculum is heavily anchored on their land which is the center of their lives. The school's curriculum mainly revolves around the 4Cs: culture and history, current reality, community vision, and competencies. The Mangyans want their school to be a model school for the indigenous way of learning, doing, valuing, and sustaining.

In developing their curriculum, they looked at their culture as the basic foundation with history supporting it. They want to have an education which highlights their dignity as Mangyans. They also want to look at their culture in the context of the current realities. They map out the realities around them and see how they can thrive in the future as an indigenous group. Along with these, they work on the competencies required by the government, as well as the needed competencies in their community.

Aside from their own curriculum, the school also develops their own learning materials which are also anchored on their culture. He proudly shared that their first students are now those who are managing the school.

In 2000, they started replicating the school in other IP groups. Six years after, they decided to put up the first indigenous college in the country. They realized that if they want the IPs to be self-reliant, then they need to have professionals in the community. Through this, the IPs can understand and coordinate well whenever a project is proposed for the community.

They also established organizations in the community, for the youth and the adults, to empower them, develop their leadership skills and to facilitate their own programs. They have also formed two networks, one on basic education and one on higher education, in order to discuss how they can further improve the indigenous education programs in the country.

He emphasized that, if we are looking at sustainability, there are so much to learn from the IPs.

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PRINCESS WARRIOR FOR PEACE

Bai Rohaniza Sumndad-Usman

Growing up in a wealthy family did not stop Bai Rohaniza Sumndad-Usman from pursuing peace-building works. She is the founder of “Teach Peace, Build Peace Movement” which molds youth from different cultures and groups to work together and build a culture of peace.

Bai Rohaniza Sumndad-Usman began by sharing a bit about her family. She grew up in an inter-faith family, her mother is a Christian and her father is a Muslim, which taught her the importance of acceptance, compassion, love, humility, and empathy regardless of one's religion or faith.

However, she did not grow up in a peaceful environment. At seven years old, she already knew what war is—how it looks, how it sounds, how it feels like. It is a sad part of her life, but she considered this a blessing. She said, that without this experience, her commitment to peacebuilding would not be as strong as it is now. This strong commitment to peacebuilding was further fueled by the stories of children who have experienced different kinds of conflicts.

She shared some stories of the children she met along the way in her advocacy for peace and peace building. One child who was exposed to violence drew a picture of people holding guns. Another child feels unaccepted and doesn't want to go to school because he was teased for being an Aeta. Most kids in Marawi, when asked what they want to be when they grow up, would answer that they want to be a member of ISIS.

She said that a culture of peace should be seen as the core of humanity to address underlying factors of conflicts—discrimination, prejudice, indifference, etc. Institutionalizing the culture of peace could break the cycle of conflict and shape generations of peace builders. Peace education is the most sustainable way of doing this.

She introduced the “Teach Peace, Build Peace” movement that she and her husband, along with their close friends, spearheaded. The movement hopes to make every child a peace builder through peace education that are holistic and contextualized.

The movement consists of people from different faiths, cultures, and ethno-linguistic groups. They practice peace as a way of life and help build a culture of peace—believing that every child is born with an innate culture of peace that has to be nurtured.

The movement practices creative and innovative strategies in their mission to build a culture of peace. They create their own materials—songs, board

games, learning modules, story books, demo videos, among others. The movement developed their own materials as there are not much available materials in peace-building.

They want to transform young people to be peace builders, to practice peace as a way of life. Peace is not just about the absence of conflict, it is a part of our lives. She emphasized that every religion teaches about peace.

She also highlighted that, if we want to help build a peaceful nation, we have to start with nurturing peace in every child. When peace starts from the heart of the children, they will definitely be restorers of peace in their own schools and communities.

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Learning conversation

Following the same process as the previous day, the participants were asked to gather their own group or attend the discussions scheduled on the blue wall. The participants were also encouraged to add agendas to the schedule if they want to.

Read the session reports on the next section, **Session Reports**.

Story Weaving

After the five learning conversations, Ms. Michelle Sarabillo invited everyone back to the circle for the story weaving. She commended everyone for coming up with 50 conversations for the day. She thanked everyone for embracing the method of Open Space Technology, pointing out that although everyone seems confused with the process the previous day, they eventually adapted to the process.

She then introduced Ms. Laraine dela Torre, Marketing and Recruitment Manager at TULA Philippines.

Ms. dela Torre began by teaching the audience the code they use in TULA when teaching the children. She teased that the things you teach to children can also be useful for adults.

She said that she is a story teller and she really enjoyed the conversations that happened today. She recalled stories shared in the morning and some learning conversations that happened afterwards. She particularly mentioned about



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH

Laraine dela Torre (top left) from TULA Philippines synthesized the learning conversations and stories for Day 2 of the conference.



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH

a session on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in early childhood learning. She said that she appreciated the contrasting views of the participants, the negative thoughts of the parents in the group and the positive views of those who gained a lot in using ICT. She pointed out the need to face our fears, which can only be confronted by hearing the sides of everyone. She compared conversations into a Venn diagram—you listen to everyone’s side and see where things meet at a common point.

She said that inclusive education is not just about welcoming everyone in a class. Inclusivity is also not just about recognizing all types of learners. It is recognizing all types of learning, that there are different ways to learn. It is important to recognize the system in place, but it is also important to understand that one way of learning may not suit another learner. Similar to, if you think your story matters, then others’ stories matter just as much.

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She also pointed out that conversations are enriched when we collaborate with each other. She cited a learning conversation earlier, a merged group of a discussion about school for the blind and of a discussion about ICT. The collaboration between these groups resulted in a more vibrant discussion and more enriched ideas.

She shared her experience when she studied in Denmark: students from different countries lived together and learned a lot from each other. She said that as they were different from each other, it was hard at first, but they were able to learn to live together.

She said that stories are the best way to communicate and understand a concept. We can study about policies and theories, but stories would be the core of everything.

She remarked that the stories earlier were very empowering—the storytellers were learning while helping the others at the same time. She said that it is also important to take care of one's self, as you will find the power and courage to help others fight for themselves when you find your purpose in life.

She ended her roundup hoping that the conversations will continue even after the conference. She concluded by saying that achieving inclusive education is a long but an attainable process ahead.

Evening News

Ms. Michelle Sarabillo reminded everyone to post their thoughts on inclusive education on the 3A wall. She also shared that aside from the stories heard through the conference, there are other stories that can be viewed on the conference website. She also announced that the speeches and presentations will be uploaded on the website.

She also congratulated the social media winners of the *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* tickets and invited everyone to continue sharing their thoughts and experiences in the conference on Facebook through the hashtag #inclusivEDnarratives.

Lastly, she went through the schedule for the next and final day of the conference.

DAY 3 | MARCH 8

Morning News

Ms. Michelle Sarabillo welcomed everyone to the last day of the conference and greeted everyone, especially the women in the group, a happy Women's Day.

To begin the day, she asked the participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and ideas as it is the last day of the conference. Participants expressed their thoughts and said that the conference is revolutionizing and empowering. A participant shared that inclusive education always comes from love, understanding and unity. Someone supported that thought and said that it is a culture of love and change. Another participant said that inclusive education is a responsibility of everyone and that it must be continued and examined. Some participants also shared their thoughts on the process. They said that the learning conversations served as an avenue to learn and relearn. It also challenges them to do something with the current situation.

Ms. Sarabillo then congratulated the participants for coming up with 82 reports within two days. She said that these are the results of the participants' collaborative effort to discuss and answer the big question.

Afterwards, she introduced the last three compelling storytellers who will share their experience in inclusive education.

Stories on Inclusive Education

THE IGTAMAN, IGNITING PRIDE AMONG PANAY BUKIDNON

Dr. Jesus Insilada

Dr. Jesus Catigan Insilada is widely recognized by multiple award-giving bodies for his innovation and creativity in using recycled and indigenous materials for teaching and integrating local culture to the curriculum.

Dr. Jesus Insilada began by saying that he takes so much pride in his ethnic name, Igtaman, which means someone who has so much to share. He said that whenever he shares his story, he feels like he is also sharing the story of his community, their people, his school and his students.

He shared that he came from a poor farming family—his father has to work several jobs, while his mother has to work as a maid in the city. He spent hours walking barefoot just to get to school, sometimes on an empty stomach. But these did not stop him from studying hard in school. He wanted to do



The last to tell their moving stories on inclusion are (L-R) Dr. Jesus Insilada, Fr. Bobby dela Cruz, and Ms. Lynette Tupas.

well in school because his family believed in his potentials—that he will be successful and will be able to share and give back to the community, just like the meaning of his name.

His journey as a teacher started from being a volunteer teacher in an IP school to landing a permanent post as a public school teacher. He is an advocate for culture-based education—develop materials and integrate the local culture in his lessons. He uses patterns in traditional embroidery to teach mathematics, he also makes sure to include and revive traditional dances and practices in their school activities. His ways of culture-based education have been taken into account for the improvement of the school curriculum in the country.

These advocacy and innovations have gained him recognition and awards locally and abroad. He is currently nominated for the Global Teacher Prize 2018 by the Varkey Foundation.

Now, he believes that he is living up to his indigenous name, Igtaman. He has become an inspiring teacher and school principal to students who were just like him, struggling due to their poor economic status.

He emphasized the importance of empowering the students through education. He said that he feels responsible in helping and uplifting the lives of his students. Seeing his students get motivated and inspired, to see them persevere amidst the difficulties, is enough for him to keep going and continue to provide these students the kind of education that they deserve.

[READ STORY ON PAGE 221](#)

GETTING HIGH ON GOD AND LIFE

Fr. Bobby dela Cruz

From a drug addict who was in and out of prison and rehabilitation programs, Fr. Robert “Bobby” dela Cruz now heads a community-based rehabilitation program that encourages drug dependents to surrender, undergo rehabilitation, and start anew.

Fr. Bobby dela Cruz admitted that he never had any interest in education. He only went to school and graduated just because everyone does. He shared how he got involved in drugs, vices, gang fights, and the like. He felt powerful then. He had money, he can buy happiness. But he never felt at peace. He realized that it was not the life he wanted.

It was when he visited a church and chanced upon an evangelization session where he felt his life turned around. Unknowingly, he listened intently to the session. He realized that he does not know anything about himself, about his life, and about his religion. His curiosity urged him to continue attending the sessions. During those sessions, he never felt judged for the first time. He felt a fire lit in him and the hunger to hear and learn more about the word of God.

Despite not having any interest to become a priest, the door to priesthood keeps on opening for him that he finally gave in to the calling. He said that the real challenge for him here is the fact that he needs to study Philosophy, Theology, and more. For someone who does not like studying, it was a real struggle. But he continued and persevered because he wanted it, he wanted to impart something to other people and to share about his faith. After graduating and being ordained as a priest, he was assigned to the prison ministry.

In 2016, upon President Rodrigo Duterte’s assumption of office, he was assigned to a program for drug surrenderees during the Oplan Tokhang. The rehabilitation program provides the surrenderees with necessary education, skills, and spiritual renewal. But more than this, it is a sharing of their journey as they start anew.

[READ STORY ON PAGE 201](#)

MOTHERS MAKE THE BEST TEACHERS

Lynette Dela Cruz-Tupas

Witnessing the plight of undocumented immigrants in Sabah, Ms. Lynette dela Cruz-Tupas started a learning center for mothers to teach their own children. From being housewives, the mothers have risen to become the pillars of the community.

Ms. Lynette dela Cruz-Tupas' story started when she and her husband were invited to visit and help the undocumented Filipinos in Sabah, Malaysia. But more than helping, they wanted to learn from the community. She said that the story she shared was not her story, but the stories of the beautiful people of Sabah.

She said that the Filipinos in Sabah opted to go there due to several reasons, mostly due to war and poverty. The children in the island have not learned to read and write yet—they have not even held a pencil in their hands. When they first came to Sabah, people from the community started asking if she is the teacher. Little did she know that their friend already went there before them and promised teaching them how to read and write.

She got to know the mothers in the community. She realized that these mothers dream for their children to be able to read and write. It was then when she realized that the mothers are the best teachers for the children. One important trait of teachers is that they love children—when the children feel loved, it opens their mind and the learning happens.

She shared that she stayed home and taught her children. This has inspired the mothers in the community. They decided to be the first batch of mothers to be trained as teachers in the community. The mothers were trained every December, and whenever the group comes back to the community, the number of learners grow. The community also started their own lessons even without the help of the group. They said they did that so as not to forget what they have learned. The mothers have also started to teach and help the mothers of nearby communities.

She expressed her gratitude for DepEd's Alternative Learning Systems (ALS). Some of the children they taught in Sabah took the accreditation and equivalency exams of the program back here in the Philippines and continued to college.

She said that the undocumented community may have been poor, but they are rich in mothers and children. Those who were once students became teachers in the community as well. All these happened because mothers took on the challenge to become teachers, and became the best teachers for their children.

[READ STORY ON PAGE 205](#)

Priority-Setting and Personal Synthesis

In the past two days, the participants shared stories and discussed ideas to redefine and re-imagine inclusive education. Ms. Michelle Sarabillo recognized the efforts of the participants to generate 82 discussions in order to answer the big question. It is now time to collaboratively identify the priorities that would best address and resolve the big question.

She invited the participants to once again read through the reports and choose five agendas that they want to prioritize in inclusive education. She reminded everyone to look at the bigger picture and think of which among the posted reports addresses the big question on “How can we grow a learning community that welcomes everyone?”.

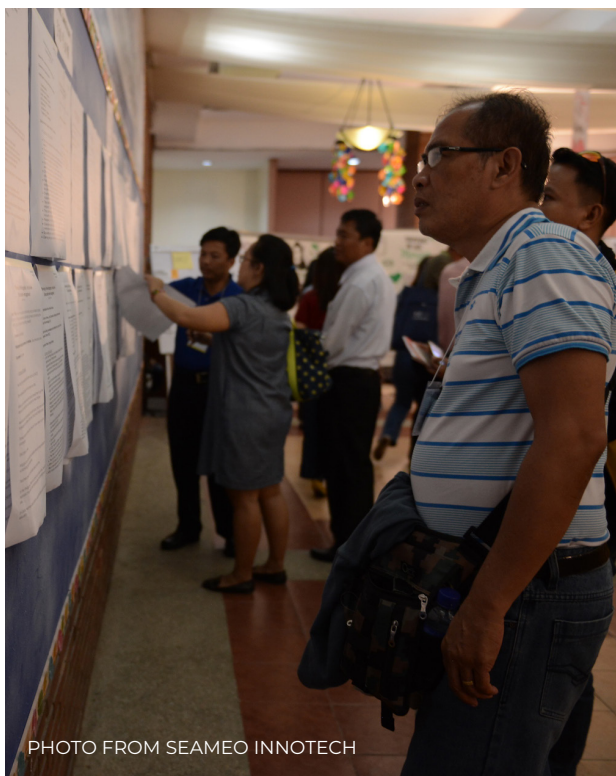


PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH

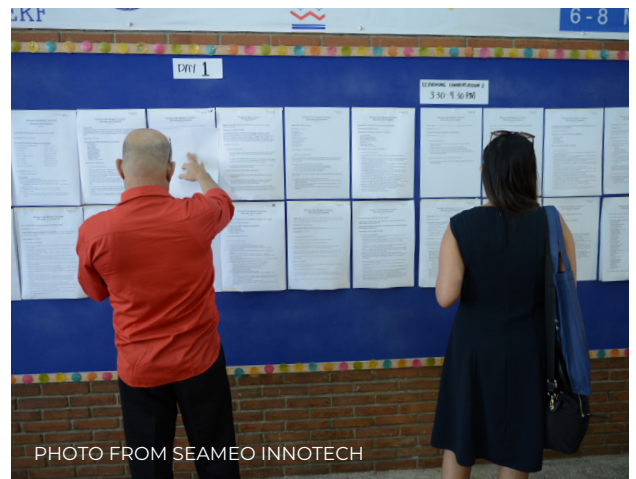


PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH

Of the 82 topics, the participants were asked to pick five that should be prioritized. They were then asked to draft their personal action commitments.

15th International Conference

Participants then started moving around the hall to identify the top five priorities in inclusive education.

The top 5 priorities identified by the participants are as follows:

1. Inclusive Education for IPs in Mindanao
2. Building an Inclusive Culture at the Different Levels of Governance at the Department of Education
3. Revolutionizing Education System for Inclusion
4. Engaging Stakeholders in Inclusive Education
5. Delivering Learning Opportunities to Diverse Early Learners

Participants are then asked to develop personal action commitments for the top priorities identified.

Story Weaving

Ms. Michelle Sarabillo introduced the last story weaver to provide a comprehensive synthesis of the three-day conference, Mr. Edicio dela Torre.

Mr. dela Torre began by sharing an idea from Daniel Kahneman: every person has two selves—the experiencing self and the remembering self. The experiencing self is the one with us through fleeting moments; while the remembering self journeys with us through life and influences our decisions in life. He said that we cannot remember all of our experiences; it is a matter of choosing what we remember and what we do with it. He relates it to the storytellers, saying that they choose to remember the negative sides of their lives and create something positive out of it.

He said that it is important to choose what to remember, how to remember, and with whom we remember. He added that we remember more when we remember together.

Mr. dela Torre shared a picture he took during the conference, said it somewhat represents the conference and its theme of Inclusive Education. He pointed out that the limit of his camera phone is like the limit of his perspective. He also pointed out that Dr. Rex Bernardo is in the middle, and he relates it to how inclusive education started with an initial focus on people with disabilities and started to grow into a more diverse discourse.

He emphasized the importance of stories in putting meanings into words. He shared that the topic of inclusive education is really not that clear to him, but hearing stories of how it started, what has happened, and where it is going, helped him to understand the concept better.



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH

Ed dela Torre (top left) wove together the stories and sessions for the whole conference. Some participants were also asked to share their insights in the three days of tackling inclusive education.

He said that, as the theme focuses on re-imagining, it is primarily important to define inclusive education. He remarked that it is important to have a clear image of inclusive education.

He noted that as the theme talks about those in the margins, it is also important to define the term margins. He realized that some of those in the margins do not consider themselves, or do not want to be considered as victims. The ones in the margins chose to be resources instead. He said that he admires that amidst the challenges and oppression, they chose to believe in the capacities, skills, and culture that they have. He said that the participants are on top of being teachers and educators, they are now all leaders of inclusive education. He lightheartedly said that they should take responsibility of the things they have posted on the walls.

He recalled the messages shared on the first day. He remembered Sec. Briones saying that education is a right as well as an enabler of other rights. She also mentioned that education should be inclusive, equitable, and of quality.

He also recalled the two story weaving sessions that happened the past two days. He asked Ms. Cecilia Soriano and Ms. Laraine dela Torre for things they want to add or alter. Ms. Soriano said that she wanted to emphasize the need to sustain inclusive education. She also mentioned the roles of school leaders

in building inclusive learning environments, as well as recognizing the innovative and creative ways we do for our diverse learning communities. Ms. dela Torre said that she wants to highlight the need to build a safe space for real conversations to happen. She said that psychological safety must be in place right from the start, because only then when they can bridge the gaps. And when the circle has been fully established, then they can go beyond it, meet and collaborate with other circles in order to build this inclusive culture. She said that this is one step in making inclusive education sustainable.

Mr. dela Torre observed that when we talk about margins, we usually talk about the struggles. He mentioned that sometimes, people tend to compare their sufferings with the sufferings of others. He pointed out that people are diverse, and the kinds and levels of struggles are also different for each person. He emphasized the need to develop enough empathy.

He also noted that we usually look for what is wrong or what is lacking. He said that we might need to look at things differently now and see the things we already have, the practices that worked, and the people around whom we can rely on.

He also talked about the different definitions of inclusive education, said that what's common to these is that they want to include all types of learners in the formal school system. He mentioned that thriving in the margins is also recognizing the different kinds of learners and the different ways of learning. He highlighted that there are multiple education systems and inclusive education is about finding the appropriate form of learning for a specific learner. He mentioned learning from life, for life, and throughout life.

He said inclusive education is not just about schooling, it is about life. Inclusive education is justifiable not just because it expands and includes learner, but because it is necessary to maximize one's capacity to help solve problems we all share.

Mr. dela Torre also related outsiders (e.g. government) and insiders (e.g. marginalized community) to birds and fishes: birds usually look at things from afar while the fish usually lives on its own world. Both have their own good and bad sides, but both must learn from each other. He also talked about the need to combine stories (fishes) and statistics (birds)—*kwentong may kwenta* (meaningful stories) and *kwentang may kwento* (data and statistics that tell stories).

He shared that he sees inclusive education as a river that is widening and deepening. Rivers flow from different directions, but merge together to the sea. Lastly, he said that re-imagining inclusive education is not about destroying what has been defined, rather, it is gaining new views along with recognizing where it started and what has already been there.

Closing the Circle

Before closing the circle, Ms. Michelle Sarabillo asked for some of the participants' take-aways from the three-day conference.

A participant shared that this has become a safe space for everyone, sharing their thoughts and contributing ideas for a more inclusive education. Another participant shared that the conference has allowed her to renew herself as an educator; the conference has sparked something inside her to pursue their plans despite the challenges. One participant pointed out that inclusive education is a culture of love and faith. Another participant complimented the conference's approach and said that he would like to organize a similar training or seminar on inclusive education.

Mr. Philip J. Purnell, the conference chair, delivered his closing message. He acknowledged the outputs of the participants—the 82 reports and their individual action plans. He revealed that they have challenged the Program and Review Committee in the conceptualization of the conference. The



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH

(L-R) Dr. Ramon C. Bacani, Sheikh Manssour Bin Mussallam, and Philip Purnell expressed their gratitude and applause to the participants for their hard work in the last three days.



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH



PHOTO FROM SEAMEO INNOTECH

committee has been asked to define “margins,” “thrive,” “re-imagine,” and “inclusive education.” And from the compelling stories that have been shared throughout the conference, we now have a better understanding of these big words. He said that the only missing here is the connecting word—the one that would connect the learners to the context, to the challenges, and to the future. He thinks that this connecting word would be the people who attended the conference. It is the participants who would continue to collaborate and work collectively to achieve the change we hope for. He thanked the participants again for being that “connection” and hopes that they can continue to be that connection in their respective work areas.

Sheikh Manssour Bin Mussallam also gave his closing message. He shared that the conversations that happened were not only inspiring but also challenging. It is a creative platform of sharing ideas and insights on the matter at hand. He particularly mentioned that he appreciated the session on simplifying the Four Pillars of Balanced and Inclusive Education. He highlighted the importance of making these complex concepts understandable to everyone. However, it is also important to be careful in their approach on the issue as meanings may shift with the different idiom.

He also agreed with Mr. Ed dela Torre’s statement earlier—we choose what we remember and what we do with that. He said that each participant is inspiring for doing their part. However, there is a need to get these individual initiatives into a collective action to actually revolutionize the system. He ended his message by encouraging everyone to be a bit more ambitious, because if they dare, they can achieve it.

Lastly, Dr. Ramon C. Bacani expressed his closing thoughts in the conference. Given that there is still a long way to go in achieving inclusion in education, he lightheartedly said that the theme might have been worded wrongly, and “re-imagining” would have been a better term to denote a continuing evolution. Nevertheless, the stories and ideas shared during the conference contributed to the wider substantial view of inclusive education. He said that what is important is what we do with what has been learned. He hopes that everyone can continue to work in their respective fields in response to the challenges of inclusive education.

He thanked everyone for participating in the conversations throughout the conference. He also thanked the conference co-organizers, sponsors, and supporters. Lastly, he thanked and congratulated the SEAMEO INNOTECH staff for organizing and managing a successful conference.

A video highlight of the three-day conference was shown to formally end the 15th SEAMEO INNOTECH International Conference.

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SESSION REPORTS

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S1A

Gender Equality and Equity

#genderequality

Convener: Teresita Felipe

Participants: Krupskaya Anonuevo, Nooramaliatifah Ahmad, Tricia Mariza Mercado, Ligaya Bautista, Phakamas Singjai

Documenter: Jelico Arriescado

Summary of Discussions:

- Gender is not problematized, as a consequence, it is not seen as an issue for most schools in the Philippines.
- School Performance of Boys and Girls
 - Higher dropouts for boys and stereotyping issues must be addressed, specifically in the Philippines.
 - In Brunei, exclusive schools for girls are performing better than exclusive schools for boys. 60% of students in Junior High School are girls, with even higher population in the universities.
- Information Materials
 - Current textbooks are still gender stereotyped for the Philippines.
 - Changing world is still not reflected in the learning materials.
- LGBT are bullied in schools.
 - In Brunei, girls wear girl clothes, boys still wear boy clothes. LGBT is not an issue and members of their community are seen as strong individuals.
 - In the Philippines, bullying (of students and even teachers) due to gender preference(s) is still an issue. There were accounts mentioned where some teachers were ostracized due to their gender preferences.
 - Several issues on the varying policies or regulations on school uniform were raised. In the Philippines, some schools implement the uniform policies strictly, while in others, especially for impoverished areas, it is not strictly implemented or no requirement at all. The issue on cross-dressing was also raised. It was emphasized that uniform policies should not be a barrier for students to go to school.
- Reversal of Roles.
 - All women and men are now equal as mandated by law, regardless of ethnicity, disability, gender preferences etc. Currently, for Senior High School in the Philippines, traditional or conventional vocational courses usually taken by males such as welding etc. are now being taken by females.
 - In Brunei, there are no restrictions in terms of what courses to take for CCA except that girls are still not allowed to play football.

- In the Philippines and Thailand, girls are allowed to play boys' games and dances and otherwise.
- Thailand used to have clear differences/delineation between genders but due to the influence of western ideologies such beliefs and perspective have changed.
- Teenage pregnancy is high in Thailand leading to higher dropouts for girls. This issue is also an emerging concern for the Philippines.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Mount a summit with other nations, particularly in the ASEAN region, to promote gender equality and equity
- Conduct more research on gender equality and equity
 - Look at the data and researches and plot the next steps and way forward. Girls with disability tend to drop out more than boys but some researches revealed that out-of-school males are more inclined to drop out than their female counterparts.
 - More researches must be conducted to help boys perform better in school, one of which is understanding why boys are performing less. Teaching approaches to various genders must come in differentiated pedagogies.
- Review current textbooks and information materials produced and ensure that such are gender sensitive and inclusive. At the moment, there is not enough male reviewers and writers, hence, most of the samples presented in textbooks are more feminine than masculine.
- Capacity-building and training of teachers are important to further promote gender inclusiveness. The more the teachers understand gender equity and equality, the more they are likely to implement gender sensitive/inclusive practices inside the classroom.
- In the University of Philippines, there is an elective on gender and sexuality. This practice made the university more inclusive as it educates students on the principles of gender equity and equality. Such course must also be offered for pre-service teachers in elementary and secondary schools.
- Teenage pregnancy issues leading to higher dropout rates for female students can be addressed through advocacies for responsible parenting and continuing education and literacy of the community and its stakeholders.

S1B

Ensuring the Learning Needs of Children with Disabilities

Avoiding Dilution by Broader Topics of Inclusion

#diverseneeds

Convener: Rex Bernardo

Participants: Lyna Basri, Salvador Cuare, Hanna Mae Aldeza, Hanna Rose Manaligod, Charles Fatima Guterres, Paulo Dias Menezes, Benjamin Gomes Da Cruz Fernandes, Aldila Filomenita Bajuyo, Rodehlia Macaspac, Lito Adanza

Documenter: Jessie D. Yamson

Summary of Discussions:

- Some of the current practices to ensure the learning needs of children with disabilities (CWD) are:
 - In Timor-Leste, a special program for CWD is conducted every weekend. Each CWD is treated equally as the regular students. There is also a special division for CWD in the Ministry of Education.
 - In the Philippines, there are programs for CWD in kindergarten and elementary schools, but often none in the secondary schools. There are trainings for teachers and faculty staff dealing with CWD.

- The CWD should be taught in mainstream classrooms, so they can adapt to the environment and have a regular student experience.
- It will be beneficial for both learners with disabilities and regular students to develop compassion, engage with CWD, and further their integration in the society.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- There should be better school accommodation for CWD and People with Disabilities or PWDs (e.g., infrastructure, learning materials, etc.)
- Schools should be prepared to better accommodate CWD through conducting teacher trainings, awareness campaigns, and learning action cells.
- Inclusive education subjects and areas should be included in the teacher education curriculum. There should be a major course or orientation on inclusive education that cuts across other courses, especially in elementary education.
- There should be an in-service training of teachers for inclusive education.
- Who will support these programs and activities for the learners with disabilities?
 - The leadership in school is an important factor in implementing inclusive education.
 - A policy on inclusive education should be formulated to guide all education sectors and educators.

SIC

Shodini Stories

Quest for Learning and Freedom

#youth

Convener: Nitin Paranjape

Participants: Joelyn Soldevilla-Biag, Thea Soriano, Nooramaliatifah Ahma, Ahmad Firdaus bin Abdullah Tahrin, Sonali Kailas Tongare, Nofriza Yesmita, Isidora Happy Apsari, Monique Adalem, Rogen Jahari, Sarah Jane Dela Rosa, Marco Alfino Miranda, Gerald Magno, Herawati Diah Kusumaningrum, Wiwik Indriyani Hadi Mulyono, Kimberly Macadangdang, Ma. Jezza Castillo, Yinri Esmera Corpuz, Aurelio Alvarez, Irene Barzaga, Pich Hay, Joseph Ryan Lansangan, Joan Castillo, Patria May-I Pedrosa Maluping, Marjoe Floranda

Documenter: Jolina Manalang

Summary of Discussions:

- Marjoe from Capul introduced the Youth Action-Research (YAR) for young women that was conducted in the urban and rural parts of the Philippines and in counterpart countries, specifically in Indonesia and India.
- A video clip of Shodini: A Quest for Learning and Freedom from India was shown. It introduced Sonali, a young woman whose life was changed by an action research conducted in her village. She, along with 22 other girls who are part of this activity, described their journey towards achievement of women's right and access to education. Their initiative has led to the creation of community learning centers in their village.
- Nitin from India mentioned the challenges faced by the 3 countries in the implementation of YAR including successes they encountered in the process.
- The young researchers shared their learning experiences, insights and further suggestions:
 - YAR have been a tool to address one of the ignored problems in their village, which is education. Findings of their study revealed that the causes of limited access to education for women are poverty and family related issues like looking after siblings.
 - The action research has transformed the community through trainings and capacity-building workshops they provide to women of their village. The mobilization on how to collect data or how to interview has increased the confidence of the young women researchers. The villages have recognized them already and invited them in community events. Their action has garnered support from the government who provided books used for instruction
 - Next steps is providing livelihood and skills-training programs to the parents of the young women of the villages.
 - Mita is from a tribal village in West Sumatra, Indonesia. Based from the conducted research in different villages, early marriages

are considered one of the primary reasons why young women do not complete and get proper education. In other areas, factors such as poverty, distance from school, and lack of interests are the primary reasons of not going to school. They have also considered bullying as one of the causes of skipping school and thus leading to early marriages for young women.

- The findings of the research were presented to their government and resulted to building of small library inside a village mosque, which addresses the need for reading of young children.
- Jesa is from Capul, a municipality located in the rural part of Northern Samar, Philippines, and is considered one of the poorest areas in the province. Despite the economic status of her municipality, their young learners have access to basic education, except for the tertiary level.

She mentioned that YAR has changed her life in many ways. It has boosted her self-confidence as well as her self-esteem especially in dealing and communicating with people. YAR has provided young mothers in their area access to learning materials through reading corners in lodged inside barangay halls. Currently, construction of a community learning center is being proposed by the local youth to the municipality's Local Government Unit (LGU).

- May is from Bagbag, Quezon City, an urban area in the Philippines

where a large number of informal settlers reside. Most of the said inhabitants, including May, stay and live inside the cemetery.

The respondent of the study being carried out by May and other selected young girls are Out-of-School Youth (OSYs), young mothers, and single parents. These participant have high hopes that YAR will help them in their current economic state.

- After the sharing, the group asked the researchers some questions:
 - What is the level of educational attainment of the researchers? Is Alternative Learning System (ALS) present in their area?

For Philippine researchers, they were elementary and high school graduates and ALS is being offered by the Ministry of the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd). As most of them are young mothers, their perceived and identified problems in terms of going to school are the availability of day care centers where they can leave their children.

- Thea Soriano mentioned that ASPBAE will publish a manual this April 2018 on how to do an action research. She said that the publication will be a compendium of actual practices and a community map.
- How do you choose someone to be a researcher?

There were no specific criteria in selecting researchers, but

the initial preference are young women from the areas identified. Eventually, YAR accepted competent young men from the respective villages. Regarding age of researchers, they follow the UNESCO-prescribed age range for youth.

- Are there partnerships with local schools?

Yes. For the Philippines, DepED Central Office offers innovation grant, where schools with partnerships with NGOs, can be sponsored from PHP 150,000 to PHP 1M. This project will end next in 2019 and they are currently in the process of selecting and evaluating proposals.

- Is the research only a case study or is it beyond that?

Initially and at the moment, the action research is a collection of case studies. But in the process and as it progresses, it is envisaged to continue further involving development of the villages and its inhabitants.

- How do you conduct the YAR?

Selected teachers carry-out the action research involving learners within the formal school system and not out-of-school youths.

- Who will maintain the established learning centers?

The three countries are in-charge of maintaining the community learning centers (CLCs) that were also co-managed by the YAR researchers for free. In India, CLCs

has been increased to ten villages. While in Indonesia, all books were distributed to the community.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

Discussions will continue in the succeeding learning conversations and tools will also be shared.

SID

Delivering Learning Opportunities to Diverse Early Learners

[#diverseneeds](#)

[#earlylearners](#)

Convener: Katrina Libron

Participants: Cherlie Tiamson, Minguela Ting, Zenaida Domingo, Teresita Inciong, Romina Bautista, Heng Sophann, Johari Haji Abas, Robert Rebamontan

Documenter: Nicole Asedillo

Summary of Discussions:

- Inclusive education is often associated with children with disabilities; however, it is important to establish that inclusion also covers abandoned children, indigenous people, children from dysfunctional families, etc.
- As the stigma among children starts at a very young age, they should

be taught about diversity—that not all children are the same and they should learn to live together.

- Constant communication between the family and the school is very important to help the children learn optimally. There should always be a continuum of the intervention strategies from the school to the family.
- Parents play a key role for schools to be more inclusive; some parents can be in denial and close-minded regarding their children's situations.
- Teachers should take the responsibility to teach these children with diverse needs. In the Philippines, instead of special educators, they are called inclusive coaches.
- In one of the universities in the Philippines, strategies for inclusive education are not only taught to SPED teachers, but also to the classroom teachers. These strategies should be tailored to every teacher: know who they are, what they can do, and what they can try to do. This will encourage them to become better teachers, and in turn, their students will become better too; believe that every teacher has a big heart to transform their students to be better.
- Moreover, courses for special education in the Philippines include topics on relating to early learners.
- Other key strategies in catering to children with diverse needs is localization and contextualization of the curriculum materials; cultural and religious sensitivity should be considered in developing the materials.

- In connection with contextualization, mother tongue language should be given importance when hiring staff and in developing materials.
- In Brunei Darussalam, the problem with subsidized education is that people are becoming too dependent on it. In terms of special education, there should be policies and guidelines on how to proceed after special education.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- For formal education, pre-service training of teachers should include in their curriculum a course on education of diverse early learners.
- For informal education, there should be on-the-job trainings on teaching diverse children.
- Parents should also be oriented and educated on the strategies that will be implemented for their kids.
- There should be a legislative policy on inclusive education from kindergarten to adult education. The government plays a key role in ensuring that all children will be given access to quality education, regardless of economic, cultural, or religious situations.
- The community should also be educated on how to nurture the children with diverse needs.
- There should be a critical review of materials on cultural sensitivity.
- The advocacy for mobilizing the work towards inclusion in education should be increased (i.e., engage mass and social media).

S1E

Inclusion in Education

#educationsystem

Convener: Naas Demyttenaere

Participants: Maria Veronica Perez, Jovelyn Petra Balantin, Shella Navarro, Jennifer Joson, Jesusa Yadao, Hyacinth Annjoy Legaspi, Regine Lapidez, Janette Lacson, Emely Pelobello, Diana Cynthia Cutierrez, Dean Ric Endriano, Alyanna Yzabelle Tamayo, Jowil Plecerda, Annalyn Aquino, Jose Tuguinayo Jr., Irene Marie Malabanan, Melissa Borela-Yanga, Nor Asurah Haji Meluddin, Catalina Cordeta, Rolando Juanillo, Elsa Tabudlong

Documenter: Genesis Montero

Summary of Discussions:

- Inclusive education should involve change in education. But how do we change education?
 - It must first be asked what we mean by education. Convener observed that when we talk about education, each has their own definition and ideas of what it is for. For some people the response goes like, "I need to earn a living." It's a tool. It is designed in a way where people get a weapon to defeat their fellow men, that is, to gain better education is to obtain better position and better career in comparison with others.
- As an example, La Salle frames education for work so students can earn a living and survive. The programs are always designed to ensure education can provide work and benefit the society.
 - Convener differed and claimed that students aren't supposed to be prepared for society separating them from society into the recluse of a classroom. It defeats the purpose. The goal has always been to create a society that ensures quality of life which is not based on monetary value.
- Do we change our education? An educational institution is not a good education provider if they uproot students from their contexts.
- How do we prepare teachers? What do we do? Is there any policy for our country that forces the teachers to differentiate their teaching? Policy does not exist; reality does not mirror our intentions. We talk about education that caters the variation but there is no program upholding this vision.
- They talk about education for the blind but in reality, there is no education for the blind. The variations that we have are not inclusive because we eliminate people based on their physical impairment.
 - If we want inclusive education to succeed, do not talk about people with disability. Because when we talk about it to teachers, everybody shuts it out because they are afraid.
 - Only 34% of Filipinos know basic Math—a very alarming percentage.

- We exclude students who fail in their 16s and 17s from college while expecting them to choose a career at that young age.
- Do we make education inclusive or simply include people?
- We should train future teachers through seminars, conferences, etc.
- DepEd produced a Handbook for Inclusive Education in 1999.
- “How do we change our education so that it becomes inclusive?” We need to improve capacities of the educators in order to deliver and implement for diverse approaches and innovations in education. Better approaches = Better education. We have to rethink and innovate ways on how to make it more accessible to learners while taking note of various differentiation approaches.
- Education was once only for the rich, then we suddenly we have this education which is available for all which carried on the old methods. Who then succeeds in the end? The rich because it was designed to cater to them.
- Sometimes education looks like the greatest robbery in town now because it's so expensive.
- How do we ensure a competitive labor force?
 - Four capital sins (C's) of education: competition, credentialism (people don't go to seminars to learn, but to retain status or be promoted), commercialization (it became a business), compliance for compliance's sake (we should be there for our students, the only way to progress is healthy willingness to break rules. Because it's about people, not the rules).
- Are you saying that because of inclusive education, we have to forgo the end goal?
 - We don't forgo standards, those are good. But it's not about the standards, but the people.
 - We put standards, but are they really helpful to promote society?
- As a teacher in a standard school, how do we apply that standard of inclusivity? What should change?
 - Four Cs: Content switching, context (are we studying in the Philippines or the US? An environment of competition?), choice (children have to be able to choose, we don't have to require everybody to do the same things), cooperation (we have to sit around tables and learn together, not table chairs). These are designs that can help people.
- How about people with severe learning disabilities?
 - Learners with severe learning disabilities must be treated with a corresponding or utmost care. These cases can be considered exceptions although some of the SPED resources for students with learning disabilities can still be used.
- What can we do as advocates of inclusive education?
 - That's the challenge and that's what the participants of the conference are trying to do. But the convener hopes that this conference is a step towards a response.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- We have to change and rethink education
- We should look at our education and teachers who exclude people.
- Do we train our teachers in diversification or other models of teaching that are inclusive?
- We should not only be busy with the victims of our systems, but the victimizers, the excluders. We do not say we live together but separate them.

S1F

Quality Education for All

#educationsystem

Convener: Josephine Bernardino

Participants: Ildebrando Caday, David Evans, Edgard Domingo, Kamonthep Chungchoo, Nur Masturah Ibrahim, Monishah Shah

Documenter: Jocelyn Ilanan

Summary of Discussions:

- Certain standards should be provided even if resources are limited.
- There should be quality assurance mechanisms for schools offering ALS programs.
- Quality special education programs should be provided.
- Aligning special education curriculum with the K-12 curriculum
- One curriculum but different programs to cater different learners
- Must meet the required number of hours
- Functional disability curriculum
- Regular curriculum without adaptation and regular curriculum with adaptation
- Special education program for children with disability—in reality, contact hours only three hours; basic is three hours: reading, writing, arithmetic
- In Thailand, students with special needs can be mainstreamed if they can adapt to regular classrooms, but may have different measures of performance; for quality assurance, new standards are being developed as well as measurements for both private and public schools
- If student cannot meet the standards, they cannot progress to the next grade level
- In the Philippines, there are different education programs in Senior High School
- Persons with multiple disabilities are left behind
- Curriculum must be implemented in different ways to cater to students with different disabilities
- Class size matters—a small class size is ideal, especially for children with disabilities

- There are companies in the Philippines that are employing persons with disabilities
- In Japan, there is a school that has 500 students with special needs; those who were not accepted by other schools can be enrolled to that school
- In Maguindanao, parallel classes exist—offering regular curriculum and Arabic class
- Convener mentioned that the root cause of rebellion in Mindanao is government corruption and unemployment
- In Malaysia, the SEAMEO Regional Center for Special Education train teachers for one month; they also have nutrition program for children with special needs
- Is there a difference in nutrition between regular students and children with special needs? Why not have the same nutrition for all children?
- Learners with disabilities who can adapt to regular classroom can be mainstreamed
- Approach of delivering the curriculum and program content are important
- Differentiated learning approach and differential learning opportunities
- Convenor mentioned that for quality assurance mechanisms, PEAC has provisions to cater to other alternative modes of delivery other than the regular 5-day face-to-face encounter to meet special needs of different learners.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

The group is united in saying that DepED should partner with private institutions of learning to ensure that there is Quality Assurance Mechanisms for inclusive education.

SIG

Passion and Motivations of Educators and Teachers

#inclusiveteachers

Convener: Paraluman Giron

Participants: Susan Cristie Delovino-Belmonte, Andrea Pineda, Owen Peña, Helen Acop, Wilfredo Delos Santos, Rosie Ladignon, Julita Aguilar, Belinda Quijano, Armando Mananggit, Nicasio Galicia, Lucila Angelo, Rosalie De Guzman, Fanny Rose Aviles, Abegail Francisco, Virgilio Santiago, Catherine Grengia, Marcedita Lopez, Mary Ann Calison

Documenter: Lovie Moneva

Summary of Discussions:

- Prior to joining Teach for the Philippines, the convener was a producer on TV and was exposed to marginalized communities. She saw how teachers continue to teach despite destroyed classrooms and harsh environments. She was able to

witness the actions of teachers who sacrifice—teachers have an impact to the community.

- Passion is to be given a seal of approval: students remembering the teacher even after teaching them and having an impact on the students. Children go to school with their faces full of hope—the children want to learn.
- Bloom where you are planted: even in the most remote and difficult locations, get involved with the community and the parents.
- Passion and selfless service: the convener shared that despite being a school principal, she continues to teach classes.
- If you love the children, they will love you back and remember you. The children are inspirations to teachers.
- “The mathematics of God is different from the mathematics of man.” It is not subtraction when you give, but multiplication. The convener shared that she may retire from her position, but she will never retire from education.
- Teaching is a calling—it is passion and dedication. The convener did not choose to stay, but she ended going back to teaching—it served as her way of giving back and paying it forward.

How will we reignite the passion for teaching?

- The convener shared that children thriving in difficult situations inspire her to teach.

- “Your attitude will determine your aptitude.” – John Maxwell.
- At present, there is a shift in the attitude of teachers: they are now more concerned of how much they will earn.
- In a design for teacher training in Prague, passion for teaching started with the self; one must ask himself/herself, if s/he really want to teach.
- Learning Action Cells (LACs) are held to demonstrate to teachers how to teach.
- School heads should regularly check on and monitor their teachers.
- There should be continuous learning—teachers should attend trainings and conferences and take post-graduate degrees and diplomas.
- Whenever we think of how difficult teaching is, we should remember what will happen to the children that we teach if we do not continue.
- The challenge is how to sustain the passion for teaching or to bring the teacher back on track.
 - Building a teacher-preneur—where teacher leadership is being promoted inside the classroom.
 - Another challenge is encouraging the teachers to stay in the classroom.
- Nowadays, the working environment among teachers in schools is: I do, we do, you do.
 - Field technical assistance: show the teachers how to do it. Being a principal is not an excuse to stop

teaching in the classroom. Be the leader in the classroom. If there is a new teacher, help.

- However, the challenge is that there are a lot of requirements being asked from principals. They are not able to observe teachers; the teachers also have a lot of requirements.
- The question is: “Do we have inclusive education in the field as well?”
- Challenge: Think of life nurturing practices of teachers from the ground and in policy. There is a cascading effect. Speak up to share your experiences if there are practices that are challenging.
- Wherever I am planted, I grow and I help others grow. That is what embodies a learning community.
- We have to look at teachers as whole human beings.
- For school heads: show teachers how to do it well.
- Life nurturing practices: strengthen the relationship between principals and teachers. The principal should inspire the teachers.
- A good leader should also be a good follower—they should also be open to new ideas.
- Get the learner’s trust.

S1H

Learning and Growing Together in the Marawi Crisis

#crisisandconflict

Convener: Lynette Tupas

Participants: Gerry Rojo, Simon James, Ma. Christine Reyes, Eleanor Sarabillo, Lito Adanza, Sharon Chao, Yolanda De Las Alas, Erwin Felipe

Documenter: Katherine Torralba

Summary of Discussions:

- There were many evacuees who were still in shock even after a month into the crisis. However, there were no psychosocial activities conducted for the victims at the time that the session convener visited Marawi City. After some time, locals (e.g., college students) conducted psychosocial activities such as games, etc.
- There were “home-based” evacuation sites like houses of relatives or Madrasahs which were expanded after some time. Although, these evacuation sites are far from the schools that are opened during the crisis.
- Consequently, mothers were trained to teach their children and transformation among them was evident. Little by little, Marawi is undergoing rehabilitation.

- Some of the refugees have moved to Manila and many other places in the country.
- In crises like this, education can be an equalizer.
- Because of the crisis, some locals learned that they had false impressions about the non-Muslims. According to them, the 'good persons' who gave them the most help were non-Muslims.
- ISIS recruitment is active until now, and not only in Marawi but in other areas in Mindanao—using money to attract recruits.
- The government should have a project for young indigent people/ indigent families to stop them from joining ISIS (Note: The ones who went to Marawi were not Maranao).
- Conduct an assessment in Marawi to identify the priority needs then eventually extend assistance in mind setting.
- The people who need the most attention are those who were left behind in the evacuation sites.
- Marawi is a picture of disaster, conflict, etc.—but it can happen anywhere in the Philippines. Marawi is not a special case because war in Mindanao has been ongoing for many years.
- DepEd Central Office has an active DRRM team. They did an assessment of the school damage in Marawi, documented the teachers and learners, asked partners for support (i.e., ADM programs like IMPACT

modules from SEAMEO INNOTECH), and conducted first aid workshops for teachers and parents.

- Psychosocial training is important but implementing it is another story
- Storytelling is a meaningful strategy during crisis; it is a healing process. Listening to stories is crucial because it can help the victims of crisis.
- People who have undergone crisis are the best persons to help others who are experiencing the same situation
- Assistance can start small and local; it has to be organized since there are many organizations and individuals who help out. This can facilitate sustainability.
- The best resources in crisis is manpower (what is available, who are there)
- Mothers are good human resources because they are more nurturing and patient; they are able to mold the minds of the children
- How do people adopt learning to situations that are not regular?

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Teachers should be capacitated on how to respond to disasters and crises.
- Organizations and agencies need to extend as much help as they can.
- Mothers can be tapped to help in crisis. They can be trained and there are many organizations and agencies aside from DepEd who can train mothers.

- Ask the mothers what help they can to/extend; ask the fathers, learners, etc. who are in crisis because they also have the capacity to help other people
- Know the needs/context/culture of the locals/evacuees. NGOs/individuals should be sensitive about the culture of the people they are trying to help.
- Do a profile of people who can help others who are experiencing the effects of disaster or conflict; create a network of people ready to help.

S11

Creating a Culture of Inclusivity in an Early Childhood and Preschool Classroom

#earlylearners

Convener: Yayi Fua

Participants: Dove Estor, Liza Libertine Magana, Rene Lopos, Razeleigh Kate Jumawan, Jocelyn Tuguinayo, Monica Ann Poliquit, Laraine dela Torre, Shailini Gestosani, Marielle Ferrer, Zulfajri Basri Hasanuddin

Documenter: Elaissa Mendoza

Summary of Discussions:

- Very young learners are often excluded in educational decisions and conversations. How do we make ourselves aware of this? How do we not do this?

- Children's voices are often not given importance within classrooms. They are often left out in decision-making.
- Children find learning to be not fun and to be boring.
- Adults tend to think that when children are given choices, the former would be relinquishing their authority.
- Teaching is structured and dependent on what DepEd and administrators authorize them to teach and how to teach them.
- Children can get burned out if exposed to too much academic stuff at an early age.
- We need to look into how the culture can be changed.
- We need to strike a balance between allowing children to choose within the classroom setting, and meeting the required competencies, standards, and schedule.
- We need to go back to basics. While it is important to adjust to the needs and characteristics of the current generation, values should still be the foundation of their learning. It is imperative that we instill, nurture and strengthen values and character.
- The use of technology among the current generation is important. But technology should not replace books and face-to-face learning. There should be balance when using technology in teaching.
- Standards and competencies are important in the formal system. Inclusivity is fostered when we look at the process being used to reach those standards.

- When young children are not being allowed to express their opinions, we are excluding them from the learning process. Often, only teachers tend to have the voice inside the classrooms.
- Inclusion is about giving choices to the young children, giving them back their voice, and letting them express themselves.
- More than the proper pronunciation, young learners should be taught how to talk first and how to express their ideas.
- In the traditional setting, teachers ask questions and students answer. In an inclusive one, we need to encourage our learners to ask questions.
- How can we support teachers? How are we affirming teachers to break from the traditional mold? Can that shift happen soonest? Many structures shape them to teach that way. Teachers should be given choices in how they teach their students.
- Teachers want their students to learn but they are constrained by the requirements of the system (e.g., school performance).
- Diversity of role models is crucial.
- The less inclusive the system is, the gap between rich and poor gets bigger. Within an inclusive system, everyone gets a chance to develop.
- If we ignore the constraints imposed by the system, we end up silencing the children.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Use diverse teaching strategies in recognition of the diversity among students (e.g., use of technology).
- Teachers should be taught to think outside the box so that they can be more creative and innovative in how they teach their students.
- School heads and administrators should become champions in promoting change.
- Cooperate and work with schools in breaking from the traditional, textbook-bound system.
- Decongest curriculum—focus on the process of learning.
- Cultivate the attitude of acceptance of diversity among students. Learners must be taught to be accepting of classmates who are different.
- Role of government is critical. Innovative programs can be developed to make the system more inclusive (e.g., Taguig LGU).

S1J

Alternative Delivery Modes for Early Learning in Urban Poor

#earlylearners

#poverty

#alternativelearning

Convener: Cecile Arcadio

Participants: Miraflor Presillas, Michelle Dulay, Carmencita Pintor, Divina Mateo, Marieber Pulvera, Noemi Lim, Angelika Jabines, Elisa Suarez, Joan Lagata, Jesusa Yadao

Documenter: Robert Daulat

Summary of Discussions:

- How is early childhood care and development (ECCD) curriculum delivered in early childhood education, specifically in urban setting?
- Street children nowadays are getting younger; published statistics on them can never be fully accurate since there may be unreported data.
- As street children do not have a permanent address, jurisdictional issues may arise since there would not be a local government to take responsibility for them. In this case, what delivery modes can be conceptualized to address these learners?
- To address this, the children must first be assessed if they can be mainstreamed to formal schooling.
- In provinces, alternative learning system (ALS) addresses informal and modular instructions. In other cases, some out-of-school youth (OSY) might want to attend formal education but are hindered due to age concerns (e.g., too old)—which can be addressed through ALS.
- Through ALS, the skills and abilities of OSYs can be assessed to transition to formal schooling.
- The alternative delivery modes (ADMs) should also be tailored to the needs of the students. To achieve quality education for all learners, the vision of the DepEd and the alternative modes for addressing student's needs and situation must be aligned. Absorptive capacity should be of paramount consideration.
- Each child and out of school youth should be everyone's concern, but there are administrative and political problems. There may be differences in treatment between rural and urban settings, but ultimately, the LGUs and the DepEd should recognize and take responsibility to address these concerns.
- It should always be kept in mind that it is the Constitutional right of the children to be given proper education.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- An example of ADM addressing urban OSYs is the *Kariton* (pushcart) *Klasrum* program pioneered by Efren Peñaflorida in Cavite, in cooperation with DepEd, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and LGUs. Initially implemented in Quezon City, Pasig City, and Caloocan

City, it is now adopted by DepEd to include curriculum and for easier adaptation to formal schooling.

- The *karitons* are brought to remote sites to conduct classes and to provide necessities such as food, school supplies, and hygiene kits. The DSWD takes care of the documents for the children to be mainstreamed in schools and their families to be included in the 4Ps.
- One of the problems in the program is the erratic attendance of the street children.
- It was introduced to regional offices in 2016, when it was treated separately from ALS programs. Today, it is now included in bridging/ intervention programs, for OSYs to be reintroduced to formal schools.
- Though it is intended to entice the school children to go back to school, it cannot be considered as a school replacement.
- There are ALS initiatives in other provinces but are essentially still works in progress. The challenge for DepEd is to be able to implement these programs and interventions nationwide for people to feel its impact. This can be achieved through formulating a policy enabling field offices to implement their own strategies. Linkages among the various stakeholders involved should be prioritized to reintroduce OSYs in the mainstream classrooms.
- Education should not be boxed to a few polices and should be immediately implemented to fit all contexts.

S1K

Curriculum Development of Alternative Schools for Out-of-School Youth

#youth

#alternativelearning

Convener: Rogin Christ Eribal

Participants: Evangeline Asuncion, Ephraim Membrere, Luong Viet Thai, Chhayyuth Chhorn, Vanna Sao, Chandler Ibabao, Gumpanat Boriboon, Leahgracia Velayo, Eloisa Garsi, Nonie Ahaddas, Liza Amor Dinampo, Victor Fedirigan, Madilen Espiritu, Mikako Ono, Hiyas Clamor-Torneo

Documenter: Benedict Santos

Summary of Discussions:

- To give context to the topic, an art for development program showcasing the work of students from indigenous groups was organized in Ateneo de Zamboanga. It was held to address discrimination and bullying cases against the said students. The program eventually grew to become an eight-month alternative school program.
- Convener proposed to discuss the components of the curriculum and features of the alternative school program for indigenous peoples and out-of-school youth of Ateneo de Zamboanga.

- The program's focus areas include creativity, arts, and digital literacy.
- Ateneo's programs are designed to supplement DepEd's alternative learning system (ALS). Students can enrol in both DepEd's ALS and Ateneo's program.
- Immersive learning activities in Ateneo's program for out-of-school youth
- Selection and admission process of Ateneo's program for out-of-school youth
- Medium of instruction is both English, Filipino, and mother tongue
- Values formation component of Ateneo's program had an impact on out-of-school youth's behavior
- Financial assistance is provided to students admitted to Ateneo's program
- The primary goal of Ateneo's program is to help out-of-school youth enrolled in DepEd's ALS to successfully transition to formal school
- The curriculum of ALS is good enough; the problem is that teachers are not fully equipped to deliver the program
- Nisai Group, a UK-based organization, has an e-learning program for out-of-school youth tailored to the competencies of students. Students enrolled in the said program find it easier to interact with other students online.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Standard modules and learning materials patterned after mainstream competencies should be presented to out-of-school youth in a more comprehensible manner.
- Given the low passing rate of out-of-school youth students enrolled in DepEd's ALS, should concerned bodies and stakeholders review the appropriateness of delivery modes being implemented?

SIL

Reaching Out to Serve, Educating to Empower

#diverseneeds

Convener: Rosiel Cochina Ducay

Participants: Theresa Jane Mendoza, Efuciza Ecay, Rosella Torrecampo, Josephine Obligar

Documenter: Eunilaine Bagalihog

Summary of Discussions:

- Language is very important to educate, and this includes sign language.
- Teachers should learn sign language to elevate their skills in teaching; this will eliminate the need for sign language interpreters in schools

- Parents should also learn sign language to be able to communicate effectively with their children and provide the support they need
- Other family members (e.g., siblings) should also learn sign language to ensure that someone else can give support to the deaf in the family in the absence of the parents
- Money is always a problem
- Persons with disabilities include persons with learning disabilities and psychosocial disabilities; there are also people who are partially disabled
- Education and work opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWDs) are limited
- Some teachers are not very committed in teaching PWDs
- It is possible to have well-equipped teachers to handle PWDs if they have passion and patience
- Individualized learning is important for PWDs
- How do we mainstream PWDs? PWDs should be mainstreamed from a very young age for the following reasons:
 - Raise the awareness of young children with no disabilities, including their parents, on PWDs
 - Teach PWDs perseverance by not excluding/excusing them from the same activities as children with no disabilities
- As long as the institutions are not adjusting their policies in terms of accepting and evaluating PWDs, it is difficult to be inclusive to PWDs

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Increase advocacy and awareness for the rights of PWDs
- Strengthen policies on education and work for PWDs
- Strengthen networks in support of PWDs
- Re-ignite teachers' passion for teaching
- Develop appropriate assessment tools for PWDs

SIM

Globalizing Skills for Senior High School

Internship in Senior High School Towards Inclusive Education

#educationsystem

Convener: Anunciacion Pagdilao

Participants: Florielyn Antalan, Kathryn Abaño, Beatriz Torno, Heracleo Lagrada, Celedonio Danda, Mendato Marcaban, Arthur Perez, Danilo Ungang, Joan Belga, Francisco Barrameda Jr., Richard Subia, Aileen Ballaran, Nimfa Maca, Kyaw Lwin, Niraphone Keobounlome, Mylene Ordilla, Maria Nessa Espina, Adeline Luarez, Leahgracia Velayo, Sopheak Chhom, Elmo Lermono, Antonia G. Tanhaji

Documenter: Mylene Dones

Summary of Discussions:

- As schools become more inclusive, we need to educate industry partners to accept children with disabilities (CWD) in senior high school (SHS) to immerse and train in their workplace.
- For ABM, GAS, HUMSS strands, the CWD may opt for alternatives such as research work and community engagement, among others. But CWD in the TVL track have no way around on-the-job training and immersion.
- It is difficult to globalize SHS if schools have no equipment, not enough trained teachers and sufficient funding.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Empower stakeholders—government, industry partners and school management.
- Issue ordinances that champion CWD, and influence and educate companies so that they, too, might promote the development and workplace readiness of CWD or SHS students.
- DepEd accreditation of SHS providers must look into the accessibility (location) and capacity of schools to partner with industries and train SHS students using proper equipment, and by employing qualified, tenured teachers.

- Schools must stipulate preference for CWD in the MOA or partnerships that they broker with industries or companies.
- Schools and its heads must also prioritize teacher development.

SIN

Managing Learners with Different Religions and Cultures

#intracultural

Convener: Rowaydah Ibrahim

Participants: Marites Romen, Jenifer Capistrano, Nadzida Mohd Nadzim, Jennifer Asing

Documenter: Regina Peñarroyo

Summary of Discussions:

- Culture and religion can be barriers to inclusion—difference in beliefs, clothes, and languages.
- Some teachers may feel out of place because of difference in religion—specifically Christians and Muslims. Some teachers may hesitate to talk and share their ideas because of difference in religion.
- DepEd's Madrasah Education in the K-12 Basic Education Program addresses education for Muslims.

- Some private schools enforce Christian Living/Religion subjects which should only be optional.
- Some schools mandate students of various religions to attend religion subjects and these are included in the computation of grades
- In Malaysia, all religions are supported—Islamic studies and Bible studies are both offered in schools:
 - There is a spiritual activity for both religions every Friday
 - Interfaith is being practiced in all schools in Malaysia
 - There are Islamic studies and moral education
 - Moral education is more general and open to all
- In the Philippines, Muslims have different tribes
 - Different tribes will have different languages, culture, traditions, and ideologies
 - There are barriers even within the same religion because of varying beliefs and practices (i.e., some Muslims are not allowed to clap, sing, or dance, while others are allowed)
 - What is allowed or not allowed is not always clear
 - The same religion can still differ in terms of country and the person's upbringing

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Tolerance is the key—we should sit down and talk to each other despite our differences.
- Policies should be contextualized to fit the needs of various groups
- Malaysia can be a benchmark for inclusion

S10

Climate Change

#crisisandconflict

Convener: Carling Dumulot

Participants: Carissa Ramirez, Jupiter Petilla, Val Amiel Vestil, Xomsihapanya Dokkham, Jackie Lou Tayaban, Marisol Mendelivar, Girlie Villariba, Wenefredo Rubio, Jury Yosores

Documenter: Febbie Ibatuan

Summary of Discussions:

- Climate change refers to significant, long-term changes in the global climate. This phenomenon poses a threat and should be a big concern for all of us specially the education sector.
- What are the negative impacts of climate change?
 - Unpredictable weather brings significantly strong typhoons.

- Bring disasters that affect the schools especially the students
- Fish kill, coral bleaching that affects the fisher folks
- Cause health problems and spread of diseases

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Given these negative impacts brought by climate change, what can we do about it?
 - Education is the key and it should start within ourselves.
 - Make effective school programs about climate change and make everybody aware of this issue.
 - Involve media in bringing information about climate change especially in terms of environmental sustainability
 - Make educational planners involving impacts of the climate change to school level plans

SIP

Discussing Reproductive Health to Students of Varying Learning Needs

#health

#diverseneeds

Convener: Mario Balibago

Participants: Miriam Coprado, Raquel Callangan, Quynh Doan Thi Hai, Bouavanh Lusa

Documenter: Nathaniel Lumbré

Summary of Discussions:

- There is a rise on the reported HIV cases in recent years—there are around 30 cases of HIV recorded every day according to a report last year.
- Minors cannot be tested unless their parents authorized them to. Thus, education is very important for these children.
- Data show that children and teens have very poor knowledge of sexual and reproductive health issues. (NDH Survey, Young Adult Fertility Survey) Problem is they do not know where to get the information.
- Teachers have a huge responsibility in educating their students on reproductive health issues; however, most teachers are not comfortable talking about sex.

- In the Philippines, there is no definitive and ideal way to discuss sex, sexuality, and reproductive health. Moreover, contrary to expectations, a study reported that teenage males experience more sexual violence compared to teenage females.
- In Lao PDR, women associations usually facilitate sessions about sexuality. Also, culture affects most of their sexual education and decisions.
- In Vietnam, Islam is not considered a hindrance in teaching sexual education.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- In the Philippines, there are initiatives from the government and international organizations. Department of Health (DOH) and DepEd developed HIV reference materials, drafted by MAPEH teachers.
- Moreover, HIV reference materials are now disseminated through videos in the Philippines. The uses of technology, such as e-learning toolkits, are now taught to teachers nationwide.
- In Vietnam, biology and health teachers are responsible for teaching these topics to the children. Teachers facilitate small group discussions with the students about these kinds of topics. Although, parents usually do not usually talk about sex and sexuality openly.
- UNICEF is providing educational assistance to street children. They facilitate capacity building using adolescent-friendly services.

- Explore ways to partner with these organizations that can provide and conduct these programs and activities.
- Continuing professional development (CPD) in the Philippines can help in solving the problem—teachers should be consistently educated on issues and matters concerning sex and sexuality.
- HIV should not be seen as a health issue rather a child protection issue. It is important for teens to share their experiences and ask questions on these issues. Parents should be more comfortable talking about sex and sexuality at home.

S1Q

Formation of Inclusive Community Values

#inclusivecommunity

Convener: Giselle Montero

Participants: Guadencio Rodelas, Francisca Tiburcio, Jeanette Naval, Ma. Lanie Socorro, Ronald Celino, Mylene Bajum, Mary Ruth Salonga

Documenter: Gianna Emilyn Earnshaw

Summary of Discussions:

- The convener started the session by defining inclusion in relation to community values, and asked the group, “When you think of inclusion,

what do you think are the values that should be reflected in the community?”

- One of the participants shared that when we communicate our values, this should also depend on our philosophy as individuals.
 - Participant shared the practices and values in inclusive education and emphasized that communities should have their standard system.
 - Emphasized the question, “How far has it been since inclusive education began and what are the steps to integrate this system?”
 - The definition of inclusion was based in the values in the community such as respect, care, understanding, equality and sense of belongingness.
 - The convenor asked the group, “Why are we doing inclusion?” Inclusion should include our respect, care, and responsibility to the community.
 - Respect is for everyone and everyone should be part of the community.
 - Caring is a universal value to the community; everyone should care for everybody and the values we set should apply to everyone, including those with diverse needs.
 - Equality is one of the community values.
 - If everyone will practice these values, these will be the major characteristics of an inclusive education.
 - Inclusion is not only about mainstreaming—it is about breaking down the barriers that are preventing them from learning.
- Inclusion should include child-friendly and family-oriented environment.
 - Government should provide budget for the teachers especially on special education.
 - Filipinos have values but there is lack of support from the community. We need to start upholding our values and support our family and government in providing an inclusive education for the children.
 - We need to have a standard policy in both local and national government to have a clear direction on inclusive education.
 - There is a disconnect between the values taught in school and the values that we get from the community—it is important to pass on the values that we identified to our community.
 - There should be an appreciation of values and potential talents of everyone. The people should be involved in an education that will give them opportunities, and that will expose them to the potential talents of the children.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- A learner must have a strong support from the community, family and the government. Teachers and families must be prepared and oriented for a child's education.
- It takes a community to raise a child—we need to see the community with a sense of belongingness.

S1R

Marginalized Non-People Groups

#indigenouseoples

#intracultural

Convener: Franco Teves**Participants:** Simon James**Documenter:** Emmy Yanga-Domingo

Summary of Discussions:

- For the convenor, non-people groups (NGP), such as the Badjaos in Mindanao, are the most marginalized groups in the Philippine society.
- Marginalized non-people groups are generally displaced and undocumented individuals who are not in the state's registry, e.g., no birth certificates; therefore, they cannot avail of the rights of the citizens such as the right to education.
- In Iligan City, the convenor saw the realities of the situation of non-people groups in how Badjaos live and are excluded from the society.
- Badjaos in Iligan City originally come from the island region of Sulu, Basilan, and Tawi-Tawi and were displaced by war. Despite their peace-loving nature, they are usually targeted by armed groups.
- The National Commission on Indigenous People in Iligan does not consider the Badjaos in the city as official IPs – quite different as to how the Badjaos living in their places of origin, may be recognized. Because they generally live in the sea, they have no Ancestral Domain in terms of land that they can claim.
- One probable reason why the LGU in Iligan is basically reluctant to support the Badjaos is because they are non-voters, a consequence of their being illiterate and unregistered as citizens of Iligan, and of the Philippines. They experience discrimination such as:
 - Badjao children are generally not welcome in schools.
 - Social discrimination is very evident in terms of stereotyping a Badjao as mendicant, illiterate, dirty, lazy, etc. Because the term Badjao is derogatory, to brand someone to be like a Badjao is to categorize him or her to a “lower level of humanity.”
- There was a measles outbreak among the Badjaos in Iligan in 2017 as they had no access to immunization. The children were the ones severely affected.
 - They could not report to government health centers because they are what they are – Non-People Group in their own country, in addition to being illiterate.
 - There were several deaths due to measles. They buried their dead secretly and nobody knew about this when it happened, not even to the faculty volunteers helping them.

- When the news of the measles outbreak finally came out and reached the LGU's knowledge, instead of sympathy, the LGU filed a complaint against the Badjao community for being a health risk to the city. The MSU-IIT faculty volunteers stood up for them and defended them before the city council. Help from DOH came later. One City Councilor at least strongly supports the Badjaos. An NGO was formed, "Friends of Badjao" spearheaded by MSU-IIT faculty and a few private individuals, to help the Badjaos in Iligan regain their dignity as a people
- Presently, there is no tangible national integration program for the Badjaos scattered all over the Philippine islands outside their places of origin. MSU-IIT is doing its best for the Badjaos to be integrated to mainstream Philippine society. A national conference on the Badjaos was held at the University for awareness, to draw the Badjao people together as a distinct ethnic group in the Philippines, and to invite more supporters and volunteers.
- The convenor believes that this situation is not isolated and is an issue that concerns not just Philippines but all countries such as Myanmar on the Rohingya issue.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Non-people groups must be integrated into the mainstream society, be it in the Philippines or other countries.

- The government should help Badjaos bring back their dignity, by advancing present initiatives. For example:
 - Friends of Badjaos – established by several MSU faculty members, it is an NGO which set up a Badjao school by the sea;
 - Literacy programs for children and skills training for adults so they can earn a living (e.g., weaving sessions every weekend, etc.)
- Help the NGPs to register in national census to be officially identified as Filipinos.
- For the convenor, the Philippines can be considered successful in its quest to create an inclusive society if there were no longer Badjaos and other poorest of the poor sleeping and begging in the streets
- The Education Development Center (EDC), based in Davao, is working on out-of-school youth in Mindanao. The organization is keen on learning more about the issue and explore further possibilities on helping.

S2A

Making Millennials Bloom with Buster and Boomer Gardeners

#generations

Convener: Paraluman Giron**Documenter:** Jessie Yamson

Summary of Discussions:

- There is a generation gap between boomer/buster teachers and their millennial learners
- Many teachers do not know which generation they belong to
- Teachers need to know themselves and their millennial learners
- Boomer or buster teachers should be adept in the 21st century learning
- Teachers should understand millennials' behavior and adjust their teaching style to them.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Policy formulation supportive of helping the teachers engage effectively with millennial learners

S2C

Measures of Success in Inclusive Education

#inclusivepractices

Convener: Teresita Felipe

Participants: Hiyas Clamor-Torneo, Razaleigh Kate Jumawan, Annalyn Aquino, Aurelio Alvarez, Irene Marie Malabanan, Eleanor Sarabillo, David Evans, Gumpanat Boriboon, Kamonthep Chungchoo, Lito Adanza, Phakamas Singjai, Monique Adalem, Jenifer Capistrano, Nonie Ahaddas, Marites Romen

Documenter: Aury Atienza-Santos

Summary of Discussions:

- What really is the measurement of success? There is a notion that inclusive education is when a learner with disability is within a school but that should not just be limited to that alone. The learning issue has also to be addressed.
- Is there an existing global indicator of success of inclusive education?
 - There is an existing inclusion education index. It's a rubric that looks at the school environment and determines the inclusivity existing within.
 - The University of Kansas has SWIFT, or School-wide Integrated Framework for Transformation. It has five domains with 4 elements on inclusive education.

- What could be the measure we are talking about? How can we really gauge if we are in the level of providing inclusive education? At present, inclusive education seems to focus alone on children with special needs. Having a SPED center is being looked as a means to say inclusive education is being offered.
- What do we do with IPs who want to be exclusive in their tribe? Does that mean inclusion? From whose perspective do we gauge inclusivity?
- Is inclusive education really effective? Are there proofs that will show it works? We want to include everyone yet the IPs for instance, do not want just anyone to get in to preserve their culture.
- In a previous open conversation, it was mentioned that in the Philippines, the greatest eliminator is the University of the Philippines, which selects students that will get into the university through an entrance exam. Inclusive education should welcome everyone. Education system should make sure that all students thrive, and this is not the responsibility alone of teachers.
- How peers respond also from each other should be looked into
- When people do not worry anymore about being accepted, or when this becomes a non-issue, then there is inclusivity.
- It is really when there is a culture of acceptance and working collaboratively towards one goal.
- Inclusion is a never-ending process.
- Inclusive education is recognizing that each of us have the ability to choose and how to provide a safe space to talk and express. It is also important to know how to address the needs of those in the marginalized sector because they also have different needs.
- Inclusive education seems to be for those higher or lower than the average students
- Measurement and assessment for inclusive education must be on the individual level because each learner have different learning curves and needs.
- Based on what Philippine President Duterte said, "If you give a person a chance to education, you give him/her a chance to change his/her life." The marginalized individuals when given education will have the means to change their lives. Success can be gained as time goes by.
- Success of inclusive education depends upon the heart of the implementers, like teachers. If they really have the passion to address the needs of marginalized learners, then it will be successful.
- Inclusive education will be successful if parents will support the program in the schools.
- There are different views and different interpretations of what inclusive education is. Global researches reveal that inclusive education is in progress, but each country would have different definitions for it.
- The number of special schools in Australia is growing. Does that indicate inclusion?

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- We should determine who are marginalized; what their circumstances are; why they are excluded; and what their problems are.
- There should be no concept of what's normal. Defining this actually puts people outside of the circle. It should be accepted that everyone is different.
- More research must be done to determine if inclusive education really works and even to determine what measures to apply.
- Can we really have success indicators for inclusive education? (Cited examples of the conflict between religion and culture)
- Policy on inclusive education can be contextualized though the methodology can be universal.
- The dilemma is on determining if all children are given the education that they rightfully deserve.
- Why do we need to even define inclusive education when it is supposed to be "Education for All"?
- One way to encourage enrollment in regular schools for those in tribal communities will be through the conduct of dialogues with their leaders.
 - Why should we even convince the IPs that they are being left behind when they probably do not even consider themselves to be in that situation?
- Society dictates what inclusive education means and who should be part of it. But the definitions can be different for different sectors.
- It is a fact the sometimes, people don't know what they are missing, what they are being deprived of; educators have the responsibility to inform them of this.
- One of the suggestions is that there should be no new policy. Look instead on how to implement and realign existing policies.
- Must address also the existing challenges to implementing inclusive education
- How can we provide an environment that is open-minded? How can we develop in the students a sense of respect for the differences? This must be taught in the school.
- Parents must have a partnership with the school, too.

S2D

Exploring the Use of Learning Action Cells and Professional Learning Communities in the Classroom

#classroominstruction

Convener: Krupskaya Anonuevo

Documenter: Nicole Asedillo

Summary of Discussions:

- In DepEd, learning action cells (LACs) are group of teachers who engage in collaborative learning sessions to discuss innovative practices to solve problems in schools. These are also known as professional learning communities in some areas.
- These strategies encourage teachers to think critically and freely discuss their ideas.
- How can we apply LACs and PLCs in classrooms?

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- As LACs and PLCs are proven to be helpful strategies in sharing innovative practices among schools and districts; its application in teaching and learning in schools may be explored, especially in universities.

- Should it be applied in the classroom settings, there should be an action research done on the benefits and challenges in using these strategies.

S2E

Education by Elimination vs Education by Inclusion

#educationsystem

#classroominstruction

Convener: Naas Demyttenaere

Participants: Jovelyn Petra Balantin, Salvador Cuare, Jesusa Yadao, Helen Acop, Lyna Basri, Wenefredo Rubio, Rosella Torrecampo

Documenter: Genesis Montero

Summary of Discussions:

- There is a lot of socio-economic problems today because of inequality. The difference between the rich and the poor has expanded immensely over a period of 50 years.
- Poverty remained as an issue for the Philippines, thereby leading to higher inequality among social classes.
- What are the motors of inequality?
 - Education by elimination or the current system being practiced in the Philippines whereby a great number of deserving yet

poor students are not given the opportunity to study from the best universities.

- In the old days, kids went with the father to the farm and they learn how to farm. Nowadays, they go to school and only 1/10 will succeed. The rest come back, but they weren't trained to be farmers. So, they go to the city and look for jobs because their training has equipped them for this work.
- Good schools eliminate students because of market value. It's not about humanitarian values, because the mindset is that education institutions are better off if they have more people who pass the board exam. Requiring a board exam is exclusivity in action—and only being practiced in the Philippines among its Southeast Asian counterparts. In other countries, when you pass the university, they know that you are qualified.
- However, exclusion has something to do with the capacity of the university too. As much as UP wants to be accommodating to all, UP cannot do that due to constraints in resources (financial and human).
- Education for all and inclusive education can not be measured quantitatively. It is the quality of the teachers and of the system that can be gauged.
- Are reward systems for education exclusive? If someone is a valedictorian or has achievements, it doesn't mean that the person is better than those who did not get or achieve any.
- Opportunities effective for one do not necessarily apply to others.
 - The problem is too big. There is a need for a paradigm shift which is very hard to do in our age. Our mindset is for competition and reward.
 - Is our outcomes-based education now inclusive or is it actually exclusive? We have to know the outcome first. If the outcome uplifted people, then we are inclusive. But if we only have an outcome where only a few people learn, then we are exclusive. Outcome must ask, "Do we really succeed in our vision?"
 - Maybe because vision is market oriented. Therefore, we must have a mindset of inclusion. We talk about values in our education: MakaDiyos, Makabayan, Makatao, Makakalikasan. But the real visceral vision is: Makapera, Makapasa, Makaposisyon, Makapromotion. Inclusion is an illusion. It doesn't really happen in reality.
- Therefore, is inclusion an illusion? The thing is, we have to learn many things. If we say we need a society that ensures a quality of life, it is an illusion.
- We should have a good sense of what we mean by education and what we mean by inclusion. The DepEd has a vision about a better education for everybody but nobody cares about that. Education policy changes depending on who is the party in power.

- ALS is a very limited concept of education. It's just memorizing things and getting a diploma to get a job.
- On free tuition: They will have an entrance exam for free tuition. But only those who perform well on entrance exams are those who have access to better education. People from the schools in Metro Manila have a higher chance of entering a university than those who belong to the provinces.
- According to the group, SPED is not inclusive—it is discriminatory. We are all people wherever we are coming from. Besides, all people can have their own special needs. But if we say “person with special needs,” that is the definition of prejudice.
- A participant shared a school activity where students can go to classes where they can explore their interests—students should be able to choose. They need areas where they can grow. They don't have to be the same, but they have to be valued in the same way.
- Teachers are underprepared. We have to prepare the teachers for the future where they can adapt in the variability of the students.
- The focus of teacher training is to become inclusive in values, skills, and content.
- There is no guidance nor counselling for teachers. Teachers need to know how to deal with problems in the classroom.
- A participant suggested that Mother Tongue-Based Education (MTBE) violates the natural acquisition of language.

- According to a study, the English language proficiency of PH is going down while neighboring countries like Vietnam continue to improve in proficiency.
- Mother tongue can only be good for the first years for the sake of transitioning to other languages.
- Mother tongue creates little pockets of exclusion.
- Textbooks suggest that MTBE approach is the best approach.
- Harvard study concludes that teachers who speak more fluently in English encourage students to read more.

S2H

Promoting Inclusive Education through Storytelling

#promotinginclusion

Convener: Andrea Pineda

Participants: Nimfa Maca, Val Amiel Vestil, Lynette Tupas, Laraine dela Torre

Documenter: Gianna Emilyn Earnshaw

Summary of Discussions:

- Stories are powerful tools in promoting inclusive education programs. It is more effective if it

is married with the use of relevant technologies and other digital platforms.

- Stories serve as micro-perspectives in facing and dealing problems.
- A documentary was shown to set context to the discussion.
- Data Privacy issue was raised saying that producers of the documentary must respect the privacy of persons being filmed. They must be informed about the details of the film including the value of such activity/endeavor.
- The stories of the scholars made an impact to the lives of its viewers and audiences.
- More than the visuals of the documentary, the good characteristics, aspirations and stories of its scholars must be highlighted.
- The stories served as a bridge to help audiences recognize the community and further promote their advocacies
- Unique stories can create lasting partnerships and greater impact to the society
- Telling stories of the scholars make other people from outside their village understand their lives and values system.
- Documenting and telling meaningful life stories preserve cultures, nurture significant conversations and promote inclusivity.
- Help people from the village because you are passionate and not because they are marginalized
- Share stories with trust and invest on the story you want to share

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Tell the story with respect and trust, and highlight the aspirations and dreams of the marginalized community
- Turn the compelling story to a conversation and be involved in the community

S2I

Education as a Great Equalizer to Poverty

#poverty

Convener: Rolando Juanillo

Participants: Carissa Ramirez, Jackie Lou Tayaban, Marisol Mendelivar

Documenter: Eunilaine Bagalihog

Summary of Discussions:

- The participants are from the Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD), an organization based in San Pablo, Laguna that has existed for 3 decades and advocated for education and poverty eradication.
- Composed of 21 institutions specializing in micro-financing and insurance. Its target clients are socially and economically-challenged families

- CARD clients can avail of loans to start or support their businesses; they also attend trainings to learn about marketing strategies. Other CARD benefits include access to discounted health services, scholarships for senior high school to tertiary education, and job opportunities. They also offer health services and student assistance (SA) to non-clients by visiting communities and conducting house-to-house campaigns; funding for the SA come from various donors of CARD
- CARD was able to send scholars to UP Los Baños, Harvard University, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- One of their clients in Mindoro was able to transform a struggling sandals and slippers business into a success story; the business is called “Bahag”
- CARD received the 2008 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service
- CARD emphasizes the importance of house-to-house visits to show each family their commitment to help families overcome poverty

S2K

Breaking Down the Barriers that Divide

#barriers

Convener: Kathryn Abañó

Participants: Rem Tanauan, Marielle Ferrer, Noemi Lim, Miraflor Presillas, Monica Ann Poliquit, Maria Nessa Espina, Sherlyn Acosta

Documenter: Benedict Santos

Summary of Discussions:

- Barriers stem from our attitude. These barriers can be: disabilities, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status, among others.
- Inclusion involves tailoring education to the specific needs of learners or groups of learners.
- Go back to the basic principles underpinning the issue of inclusive education as a way of exploring or designing solutions
 - Understanding inclusion in terms of exclusion
- Emphasize values that promote inclusion: acceptance, love and trust.
- Anecdotes on paradigm shifting to overcome judgement
- Regional competency framework for teachers
- Make jargons simple for teachers

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- How to practice human goodness in the work of teachers?
- Bridge gap or take down the barriers through: recognizing diversity, transcending labels, and embracing values that promote equality.

S2L

School Leader in an Inclusive Setting

#inclusiveteachers

Convener: Jupiter Petilla

Participants: Charles Fatima Guterres, Bouavanh Lusa, Niraphone Keobounlome, Sopheak Chhom, Paulo Dias Menezes, Eko Lesmono, Rodehlia Macaspac, Josephine Obligar, Leahgracia Velayo, Ma. Jeanette Naval, Minguela Ting, Ma. Lanie Socorro, Gaudencio Rodelas, Mylene Bajum, Francisca Tiburcio, Mary Ruth Salonga, Jennifer Asing, Nadzida Mohd Nadzim, Ephraim Membrere, Madilen Espiritu, Chandler Ibabao, Kimberly Macadangdang, Eloisa Garsi, Cherie Tiamson, Pich Hay, Roland Diaz, Liza Amor Dinampo, Kyaw Lwin, Nur Masturah Ibrahim, Monishah Shah, Evengeline Asuncion, Helen Acop, Ronald Celino, Robert Rebamontan, Florielyn Antala

Documenter: Emmy Yanga-Domingo

Summary of Discussions:

- What is a leader?
 - A person who builds trust among staff and can work with them hand in hand;
 - Agent of change;
 - Inspires people to work together;
 - Should lead the group towards one vision;
 - Role model (should walk the talk);
 - Is a strong decision-maker and motivator;
 - Must have command responsibility;
 - Is capable of producing another leader;
 - Can influence people towards one vision.
- What is an inclusive education?
 - Education for All (EFA);
 - Respect for all individuals;
 - Education that accommodates all;
 - Making out-groups included in in-groups—include marginalized sectors in the society;
 - Caters to all kinds of learners in the community.
- What are the attributes of a school leader to achieve inclusive education?
 - Should have good EQ. Although IQ is important, EQ is more important especially when one

is in the field as a school head dealing with various attitudes of people;

- Should have a heart for children;
- Should have ownership of the school;
- Should be able to influence staff towards one vision;
- Should possess ABCs—positive Attitude, Behavior, and Character;
- Leaders should be transparent in order to build trust;
- Should have personal commitment and be able to come up with creative ways to address challenges;
- Provide equal opportunities to learners and showcase talents;
- Shares concerns of pupils and gives children a child-friendly environment;
- Humility and kindness in service.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- The participants agreed that school leaders play a crucial role in making or breaking achievement of inclusive education in their respective schools.
- They agreed that good practices among school heads and principals should be shared as a way to benchmark with peers.
- The following were mentioned as some of the good practices on school leadership in an inclusive setting:
 - Establish and sustain effective and collaborative partnerships with stakeholders;

- Use of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in classrooms;
- Know the needs of every learner as well as parents in order to effectively address the school's challenges.

S2M

Catering to Learners with Disabilities without SPED Teachers

#diverseneeds

Convener: Marieber Pulvera

Participants: Hannah Mae Aldeza, Hannah Rose Manaligod, Mae Dumapig, Ma. Giselle Montero, Irene Barzaga, Shella Navarro, Jennifer Joson, Heracleo Lagrada, Jocelyn Barbosa, Edgard Domingo, Joan Belga, Laraine Dela Torre, Danilo Ungang, Celedonio Danda, Mendato Marcaban, Arthur Perez, Marvin Alde, Anunciacion Pagdilao, Florielyn Antala

Documenter: Mylene Dones

Summary of Discussions:

- Some parents find it hard to accept that their children have special needs before assessment or after initial assessment.
- The heart of the teacher should be for everyone.
- Some disabilities are not so easy to spot (e.g. hearing disability).

- Assessment is important. Expert assistance is key to identifying disabilities in order to facilitate proper response.
- Let us not put the burden on our teachers alone.
- We must not isolate children with special needs. They can and will overcome their disabilities.
- Let us make it easier for them to be included.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Include SPED subjects in the Bachelor of Science in Education Curriculum.
- Review existing policies by DepEd and structure in the LGU (PDAO).
- Educate school heads and teachers in both basic and higher education.
- Ask the students how and what they want to learn.
- Make materials and locations accessible (Some materials are rendered as images instead of text, hence text-to-speech apps cannot read them).
- Empower communities – schools, parents, NGOs and the general public.

S2N

Strengthening Differentiated Instruction

#classroominstruction

Participants: Richard Subia, Luong Viet Thai, Nor Asurah Haji Meluddin, Nooramaliatifah Ahmad, Chhayyuth Chhorn, Quynh Doan Thi Hai, Hanh Doan Thi Thuy, Cristie Delovino-Belmonte, Simon James, Joseph Ryan Lansangan, Rosiel Coching Ducay, Johan Asai, Antonia Tanhaji, Madilen Espiritu, Evangeline Asuncion

Documenter: Regina Peñarroyo

Summary of Discussions:

- We can differentiate learning instruction in terms of activities and assignments.
- Teachers have extra work and differentiated instruction takes extra time and effort from their end.
- Differentiated instruction depends on the needs of the students; it can address inclusion of students with disabilities.
- Some students with disabilities can excel in mainstream education.
- In Brunei Darussalam, some students with learning disabilities are mixed with other students; there are expert teachers who can address their needs.

- Students with disabilities (e.g., visual impairment) are accompanied by a teacher in the regular classes. Afterwards, they have a one-on-one session in which they study the topics in the regular classes using Braille.
 - Different styles of learning must be addressed
 - How do we strengthen differentiated instruction, so we can become more inclusive?
 - Teachers must be competent and patient.
 - Differentiated instruction is used in multi-grade education; however, some teachers may not be effective in differentiated instruction.
 - The number of students in a class is also a challenge. In Brunei, normal classes have 28-30 students per class. In the Philippines, the average is 50 per class.
 - In higher education, differentiated instruction is new.
 - In the University of the Philippines, there is academic freedom. It is up to the teacher how to teach the class.
 - There is a challenge in identifying which students have special needs
 - A doctor's help is needed
 - There are cases in which parents do not disclose the child's medical history
 - Family matters and emotional stress are some of the problems of students in higher education.
- In differentiated instruction, you design several lesson plans for the same competency.
 - Students will do different activities with the same objective.

For example, in writing, some may write cursive letters, others can only write straight lines.
 - Students will have homework which should be communicated to the parents.
 - Students need attention.
 - The lack of materials is a challenge in differentiated instruction. You have to go beyond and ask for help in what you need.
 - Some parents of learners with disabilities depend on the teacher to teach their child.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- We need laws to strengthen differentiated instruction and to promote inclusive education
- Strengthen teachers' competencies
- Ask for help from school administration, fellow teachers, and parents.
- Learning Management System can help in implementing differentiated instruction. Face-to-face classes are blended with online components.
- The session ended with one participant teaching how to say, "Thank you, it is nice to meet all of you" in sign language.

S2P

Building an Inclusive Culture at the Different Levels of Governance in Education

#educationsystem

Convener: Jose Tuguinayo Jr.

Participants: Regine Lapidez, Hyacinth Annjoy Legaspi, Janette Lacson, Theresa Jane Mendoza

Documenter: Nathaniel Lumbré

Summary of Discussions:

- All levels in DepEd should do the following:
 - capacitate its personnel through continuous training and development learning;
 - ensure partnerships and collaborations with LGUs, GOs, and NGOs;
 - benchmark; and
 - define policies that are supportive of inclusion at the different levels.
- Filipinos should develop a culture of inclusion—children should be able to succeed wherever they are.
- Inclusive culture should be evident in all levels of governance.

- Communication with all stakeholders is the key to inclusion.
- We need more support from the leaders.
- Local government activities should help a lot in promoting the advocacy of inclusion.
- Problems raised from the teachers to the principal: bottom-up approach.
- Parental organizations should help in these activities of inclusive education.
- Local government units should form agreements with DepEd for support.
- There should be policy-making initiatives concerning inclusive education at the different levels.
- Revised policy on Special Education encompasses all programs in DepEd.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Schools from different municipalities should implement inclusion programs.
- Participation of stakeholders should also be taken in mind.
- Academes and external stakeholders should review their policies to align with inclusive education of DepEd.
- Suggest crafting a system to recognize personnel strengths.
- Consider the deaf in the national testing of competence.
- DepEd-trained trainers to help Grades 1 and 7 receiving teacher ready for inclusive education.

- Strengthen partnerships with external/ international organizations.
- DepEd to conduct seminar on RDs and SDSs about inclusive education.
- We should give importance on implementation of inclusion programs.
- We should elicit support from LGUs and NGOs.
- DepEd should facilitate skills training programs in communities.
- DepEd has a process of Policy Formulation which emanates from the grassroots. Planning Service monitors and assures quality of all policy formulation of DepEd
- Part of the policy formulation process is validation by different stakeholders.

S2R

Receptive and Open Educational Policies to Foster Inclusive Education

#educationsystem

Convener: Owen Peña

Participants: Nicasio Galicia, Virgilio Santiago, Wilfredo Delos Santos, Fanny Rose Aviles, Carmencita Pintor, Julita Aguilar, Rosie Ladignon, Lucila Angelo, Rosalie De Guzman, Armando Mananggit, Abegail Francisco, Divina Mateo

Documenter: Febbie Ibatuan

Summary of Discussions:

- Some factors that prevent the School Heads in implementing inclusive education:
 - deviating from the policies; and
 - too many innovations that school heads want to implement but are hindered by certain policies.
- For example:
 - An action research proposed by a school head can be conducted but will not be credited for promotion unless permitted by superintendents.
 - School improvement plans need an approval of the higher-ups. If one of the projects is not permitted, although it will be beneficial, it will not be implemented. Funds is also an issue on this matter.
 - School heads have the power to suspend or expel a student based on their behavior; however, it may have a negative impact on the school and the school head.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- There is lack of communication within the system with regard to policies; it is important to have a dialogue to address this issue.
- Promote underground innovations

S3A

Promoting Quality Learning for Prisoners

#prisoners

Convener: Yolanda de las Alas and Raymund Narag

Participants: Sherlyne Acosta, Irene Barzaga, Hiyas Clamor-Torneo, Gerry Rojo, Benjamin Gomes Da Cruz Fernandes, Charles Fatima Guterres, Paulo Dias Menezes, Owen Peña, Marielle Ferrer, Rem Tanauan, Sharon Chao

Documenter: Jelico Arriesgado

Summary of Discussions:

- Dr. Raymond Narag shared his personal journey from being a falsely accused inmate to a passionate educator transforming lives of people inside the prison.
- He discovered his calling to teach after he was denied of bail and decided to make the most of his time in prison by teaching basic and functional literacy to his co-inmates.
- Functional Literacy Program
 - He formed an informal classroom inside the Quezon City Jail in collaboration with a co-prisoner who was also a former teacher.
 - This initiative grew to include 3 more inmates teaching basic subjects like Math, Science, Sibika, Reading and Writing.
- He sought assistance from politicians to fund some of their school requirements (e.g. supplies, books, instructional materials and converting some cells into classrooms) and asked the warden to allow inmates to attend sessions daily.
- Successfully, his effort to teach literacy programs was seen as a rehabilitation program for the inmates.
- In 1997, the Philippine Department of Education Bureau of Alternative Learning System deputized and recognized their initiative as part of the Non-Formal Education program of the department using modules as means of instruction.
- Jail Guard Education
 - One of the challenges encountered in the implementation of the literacy programs inside the prison is ensuring that the warden supports their effort to educate and make inmates functionally literate.
 - Dr. Raymund was able to secure the support of their jail guards by constantly communicating with them and informing them about the advantages of the program and how such activity will be able to transform inmates into better individuals.
 - In their 4th year of implementation, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) adopted and replicated their literacy programs in jails in Manila and Caloocan.

- Documenting and Manualizing his Experience inside the Prison
 - According to Dr. Narag, he was able to accidentally find his purpose inside the prison. For him, there is an inherent goodness inside every individual that, if properly nurtured, can transform people who initially went astray to become better citizens of the country.
 - Dr. Narag documented and shared his experience through his books that garnered interest and support from various organizations and agencies.
 - He became a consultant of the Supreme Court through his published works on his jail experience. He supported jail and court officials by sharing with them his personal accounts, insights and thoughts on the country's jail management system.
 - He was able to get a Fulbright Scholarship for his efforts and is now studying and specializing in criminal justice in a university in Illinois.
- For him, educating people inside the prison or inmates can really make a difference, as it transforms the minds and spirits of the prisoners and channel their potentials to proper use.
- Mr. Rojo shared his experience in an extension class inside a women dormitory/correctional in Iloilo City. They introduce or teach programs that prepare the inmates for their release. They provide them with livelihood training as well as counselling activities.
- Dr. Narag stressed that development program inside the jail must be holistic and integrated. It must expand to consider a prisoner's individual development needs in terms of spiritual, psychological and intellectual growth.
- Program Matching. For Dr. Narag, the needs and motivations of each prisoner must be assessed and matched with the current programs.
- Anti-Drug Relapse Program
 - Dr. Narag introduced this activity to ensure that participants will not go back to their bad habits like illegal drug use.
 - To implement the program, he coordinated with leaders of gangs inside the prison and inform them that such action (i.e., use of illegal drugs) will put other inmates at risk. This led to getting their support and pushing with his goal and planned activities.
 - He was able to develop modules that aid inmates in understanding further the impact of illegal drugs into their lives.
- Quality Learning inside the Prison. According to Dr. Narag, quality education inside the prison entails individual assessment of the inmate; provision of differentiated learning and instruction; and preparation of the prisoner for their lives outside the prison.

What will we do now to sustain their efforts? What needs to happen next?

- Sustaining programs inside the prison is quite difficult as the context and realities vary constantly.
- Best practice, however, is to forge partnerships with focal government agencies and private sectors like DepEd, BJMP, Bureau of Corrections, TESDA, DTI, DOLE, Open Society Foundation, UNDP etc.

S3B

Inclusive Education Re-imagined

The Absence of Prejudices and “Disabilities”

#diverseneeds

Convener: Salvador Cuare

Documenter: Jessie D. Yamson

Summary of Discussions:

- To set some background on the topic:
 - Some schools focus on the 10% rather than the whole
 - Some are prejudiced and tend to put people in a box re: capabilities of persons with disabilities (PWDs)
 - “Disabilities” refer to disabilities by choice—choose not to hear or turn blind

- Everyone should be treated equally and welcomed in school, community, and work—regardless of background, experiences, gender, religion, etc.
- Teachers should be educated on inclusive education
- Developments in inclusive education:
 - Only 2.2% of PWDs are in school in 2012 and slowly increasing
 - Some schools are offering MA in Inclusive Education such as St. Louis University
 - DepEd ensures inclusive education for learners with special needs through instructional programs and by strengthening teacher’s capabilities
 - CHED Memo No. 77 S. 2017: Policies, Standards and Guidelines for Bachelor of Inclusive and Special Needs Education

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Accelerate and concretize the implementation of policy and programs on inclusive education

S3E

Education Equilibrium for Less Fortunate Children and Victims of War

#crisisandconflict

Participants: Erwin Felipe, Jury Yosores

Documenter: Genesis Montero

Summary of Discussions:

- Erwin is assigned in Marawi to help children in evacuation centers. In his perception, NGOs proceed with baseline assessment first—considering what they need based on government records.
 - Since the clearing of bombs has not been cleared yet, rehabilitation has yet to ensue. Psychosocial training and psychological care is needed especially for children to cope with their emotions.
- Less fortunate: Adopt psychosocial activities and storytelling to entertain them. Parents are essential to the growth and encouragement of children. Holistic training and development is needed; therefore, there should be seminar and training for parenting.
- Immersing in a less fortunate Muslim community takes a different approach compared to disaster-ridden communities. Being exposed to violence and war, Muslim communities in Mindanao will need a special approach.
 - Rohaniza Sumndad-Usman's anecdote on children wanting to become members of ISIS proves the point.
 - Approach should balance the emotion on the positive and negative side.
- Quezon City Public Library librarians go to less fortunate communities
 - Cebu issue: Volunteers experience extortion through blackmail false accusations of sexually harassing students.
 - There is always danger in reaching out to communities of less fortunate.
 - Volunteer teachers are especially limited in less fortunate communities due to harassment. Community penetration is discouraging.
- Child labor is a threat to education. Parents discourage children from education and usher them towards labor to earn money.
- For New People's Army: In Erwin's experience in Kitautau Municipality, penetrating areas with NPA is difficult—soldier escorts are needed.
 - NPA has built a school for the far-off community. They crafted their own curriculum which encourages anti-government endeavour. It was a challenge for Erwin's group to re-orient the children or even train new teachers as the area is still a danger zone.

- IP children have been trained and equipped for war. As an example, indoctrinated children are afraid of uniformed personnel due to brainwashing.
- Even teachers are being convinced by the NPA to join their efforts.
- Endeavors reaching communities suffer budget constraint.
- Government funding for endeavors is insufficient.
- Being part of World Vision, he was able to see the direct impact of their efforts; it is said to be more satisfying than working for the government. He is more confident in NGOs than the government. We need more NGOs.
- IP Communities have *datus*— they need to train the leaders of communities and involve them in the endeavour.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Erwin suggests tie-ups with government and NGOs to reach far-flung communities. There must also be holistic training involving livelihood training (TESDA) for parents to provide quality education for children. Both parents and children must be re-oriented.
- Strengthen the Senior High School program. This will produce more workers and more work in the local communities of the student. Livelihood must be developed in their own community and context because alienation happens when they enter another community. This is also good to curb anti-government endeavors since it solves the basic need of the community.

S3F

Make Them Shine

Focus on Out-of-School Youth Innovation

#youth

Convener: Liza Amor Dinampo

Participants: Agee Linan, Gemma Matabang, Candra Penoliar

Documenter: Jocelyn Ilanan

Summary of Discussions:

- Why out-of-school youth (OSY)? The Education Development Center focuses on OSY, particularly in eight focus areas in Mindanao
- EDC Project has been running for 5 years already; it provides free skills training and alternative learning system
- Why not give the same attention to the OSY as the youth in the formal school system?
- There are some youth who are being recruited by lawless elements, instead of being in school
- If youth cannot afford to be in the formal school, there must be a center that would provide programs and would not make OSY feel inferior from youth in the formal schools.
- There are many factors that contribute to increasing OSY, mostly due to poverty

- Due to poverty, many youth choose to work instead to provide for the basic needs of their families.
- Conflict adds another layer of complexity on the state of OSY
- Many OSYs are deprived of opportunities
- Many training programs may be free, but the participants are not able to provide for their daily fare and allowance to attend the training
- Even if OSY are given education scholarships, it is a struggle for them to sustain their basic needs (i.e., daily school allowance); it may still result to decline in attendance
- It may also be difficult to establish learning centers in high conflict areas due to threat from lawless elements
- It is important that OSY will be able to see hope in their future; the culture of hopelessness must be eliminated
- DepEd (Pangasinan-Division I) caters all through ALS programs
- DepEd ALS may also tap LGUs
- In Bayambang, Pangasinan, a Foundation has been established to create different programs (like tech-voc, skills training, etc.)
- Special education students are being mainstreamed
- In establishing learning centers for OSY, it is a priority to also address poverty

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Clear consultation with the community is needed, but the government must take the lead in facilitating their initiatives
- LGUs must also be supportive of the programs for OSY
- There must be a long-term approach in addressing the needs of OSY
- Innovation will focus on different programs like sports, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, etc.
- Ensure that there is a labor market that will employ skills-trained OSYs; there must be linkages between the capacity building centers and the labor market
- Provision of training for OSY ALS facilitators which may include personality development, values formation, values at work, leadership, etc.

S3G

Helping Undiagnosed Students with Special Needs

Even Without Special Education Teachers

#diverseneeds

Convener: Ahmad Firdauz bin Abdullah Tahrin

Participants: Jovelyn Petra Balantin, Jesusa Yadao, Pich Hay, Vanna Sao, Mikako Ono

Documenter: Lovie Moneva

Summary of Discussions:

- There are some parents in denial of their children's special needs. Thus, there should be a psychologist or psychometrician to properly diagnose the children. In Malaysia, for example, there is a counsellor in the schools for the students.
- The parents should be part of the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) team so that they know their roles in educating the children.
 - The main source of education and intervention is the home. The school is there to help the parents and the children.
 - However, some parents refuses when the school tells them to have their children diagnosed

by doctors. The parents say that the kids should just be given time, and they will be eventually developed.

- In a class of 30 students, is there a way to handle children with special needs?
 - There is an assessment tool (M-test) that can be used for placement of children with special needs. It is a checklist with 18 items; if 10 items are observed, the child is suspected to have special needs. However, there is still a need to have formal diagnosis. We are not allowed to label children without formal diagnosis in the Philippines.
 - There should be formal assessment as well. However, the problem is that the children wait too long before they get diagnosed, sometimes taking as long as three months.
 - The next step is orienting the teachers on the situation of the child, then his skills should be assessed.
 - Question: Do we need to develop a program? Or place them in programs that are already existing?
 - Question: Do we need to group them if they have special needs? But is that inclusive?

Children with special needs could be grouped for class period, then be put back in class in the next period.

- However, there are children who need to be placed aside to

- prepare them better. When the children are ready, they can be brought back to the mainstream.
- The children's conditions are something that we cannot control. Though we have an inclusive mindset, we still need to prepare the children for the mainstream. They are still in school around other children, they can still have friends and new people to interact with.
 - Maybe the children can have assigned mentors to build their confidence. The challenge is if there are not enough teachers.
 - Challenge: We were told that we should not give grades to children from the SPED program. However, the grades are required upon enrollment to high school.
 - We do not want to exclude students who do not have a degree. That is why we provide the children with online courses that give certificates. We have live courses in English with the UK company, and are still trying to localize these. The certification depends on the age and ability for the online course. There is an assessment for three weeks.
 - We should not have separate grading system for children since they are mainstreamed, but we can modify the way we teach and assess them.
 - Currently, we assess them the same as others. However, the results are not as good as others. We need to simplify the instruction and questions.
 - In Cambodia, there is limited information dissemination. The acceptance of inclusion is limited to one area—there is a need to change the people's mindset and prepare the schools in accepting children with special needs.
 - In an experience of a participant, people judge children with special needs when they experience meltdown. We need to do something or else the children will be left behind. The teachers may leave them behind because these children lack skills.
 - In Japan, there are restaurants that hire children with special needs. However, some of these children are employed and exploited to improve the company's image.
 - We need to monitor the company to avoid exploitation of the people with special needs.
 - There is a community center where they can gather after school and go to engage the companies.
 - In Malaysia, there is a restaurant hiring children with autism.
 - There was an incident when one child threw a chair from the second floor. We try our best to look after them, but it is difficult to look after them.
 - Some children with autism are extremely good at various things; a participant's child, for instance, instantly learned Chinese. In Japan, children with disabilities learn life skills. In the Philippines, we have a functional needs school. The program depends on the condition or cognitive ability of the kids.

- In Baguio City, the teachers are well-trained. We hire teachers with SPED specialization. There is a university which offers those courses. The training is not a problem; however, we do not have the facilities.
 - In Malaysia, we can get resources for facilities, but we do not have enough experts.
 - In Cambodia, we have the same problem, we lack training and facility.
- Question: Do you agree that schools use occupational and speech therapy for children without diagnosis? The children may not have diagnosis, but there are some who needs help.
 - The basic skills such as computer, gardening, carpentry, among others are what they need for livelihood. That is what is lacking in the Philippines.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- There is an e-learning course from NISAI groups for children with special needs. We provide after school courses for children with ASD, disability, and out of school youth.
 - In our special programs in Japan, the parents are quite engaged. This may be a cultural difference.
 - We can use that to create interest in students. Eventually, parents may open up when they see their children enjoying the program.
- How do we make parents understand the condition of their children?
 - Challenge: They do not have money to have the children assessed.
- There should be cooperation within the community.
- The Department of Education could hire psychometrician for diagnosis per district. But the problem is parents still refusing to have their children assessed.
- The commitment of the parents should be gathered. There should be an organization of parents to advocate. The parents need to understand and accept that some children have special needs.
- Use Open Space Technology to share successful experiences of early intervention.
- Use social media to inform other people about inclusive education.
- The community must be aware of the inclusive education programs. But the challenge is to support the community and the school with the programs.
 - Organize a town hall meeting with the parents to talk about inclusive education and inform the community about the condition of different learners. In the future, the children can apply for jobs because they are capable.
 - We can engage restaurants, hotels, and other establishments to hire learners with special needs. They can work on tasks that they are able to do.
- We need to gather these children and prepare them for the mainstream. At the same time, we should influence the parents to be more open to the idea of inclusion. We can also make appointments with hospitals to have the children diagnosed. Afterwards, they can start therapy.

S3H

Teachers' Role in Ensuring the Children's Impact in the Learning Process

#inclusiveteachers

#classroominstruction

Convener: Heng Sophann**Participants:** Helen Acop, Luong Viet Thai, Sopheak Chhom, Phakamas Singjai, Porntip Uppatum**Documenter:** Katherine Torralba**Summary of Discussions:**

- In Cambodia, public school teachers teach half a day for six days. But some of them also work in private schools or organizations for additional income. Working such schedule everyday is difficult and tiring for the teachers.
- In Cambodia, the government has issued guidelines for teachers on their absences because some teachers prioritize teaching in the private schools.
- Teaching to receive income instead of educating students.
- To ensure learning or progress in student performance, the following are being implemented:
 - In the Philippines, the school head observes classrooms and

teaching demonstrations, and teach classes of absent teachers. It must be emphasized during professional development activities that “teaching should start from the heart” and “teaching is a vocation, not a job”. There must also be intensified monitoring and evaluation with focus on interventions in low performing subject areas. The school head also ensures that subjects are assigned to teachers with the specialization required.

- In Vietnam, formative assessment and differentiated instruction is conducted. School heads organize lesson reviews to help teachers with instruction and to give feedback.
- In a new generation school in Cambodia, there is an annual agreement with teachers on attendance to ensure their compliance with the regular work in public schools. If a teacher is absent and there is no substitute teacher, students spend their time in the library to read books and browse tablets.
- In a private school in Thailand, teachers are screened and prepared through multiple teaching demonstrations before teaching an actual class. Formative assessment is conducted such as group activities, and summative assessment (paper test). Students should be allowed to be independent in their learning.
- On the other hand, in a public school in Thailand, the practice is: (1) synthesizing data from the

national test, (2) peer mentoring where outstanding students help low performing students, (3) grouping of low performing students for intervention, and (4) conclusion (summary/review of all lessons)

- National tests in the Philippines and Thailand are given in 5 subject areas while 13 subjects in Cambodia.
- Different schools (i.e. private schools, international schools) in Thailand and Cambodia are offered to enhance English language skills
- Teaching style in Thailand has changed because of 21st century learning—there is more student engagement.
- Budget for instructional materials in the Philippines is provided by the government; in Cambodia, most schools do not receive enough resources, so students are not engaged. But there are 11 New Generation Schools in Cambodia which has sufficient resources like ICT and money.
- In many public schools in the Philippines and Cambodia, students are not allowed to bring their cellphones to school. But in most private schools in Thailand, students are allowed to use cellphones and iPads for learning. School iPads are not allowed to be brought out of the room so they can have face-to-face interaction with other students.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

Learn from the discussion and study if the good practices shared can be applicable in one's own context.

S31

Engaging Stakeholders in Inclusive Education

[#inclusivecommunity](#)

Convener: Johari Haji Abas

Participants: Edgard Domingo, Nooramaliatifah Ahmad, Cherlie Tiamson, Rodelia Manaspac, Minguela Ting, Eleanor Sarabillo, Josephine Obligar, Mary Lonna Buenafe, Mylene Ordilla, Rembert Bautista, Rogen Jahari

Documenter: Elaissa Mendoza

Summary of Discussions:

- In 2009, Brunei Darussalam implemented the SPN 21 as their education reform for the 21st century. It includes two aspects of inclusive education: 1) for children with disabilities, and 2) for children with low performance in school.
- In the Philippines, two public schools (General Santos and Sta. Rosa, Laguna) and one private school also shared their good practices in stakeholder engagement.
- One school in Lamitan City was confused about who their stakeholders are, so they asked for advice on how to get support from a local government unit (LGU) if the school is geographically assigned to one division but administratively belongs to another. The mayor

could not give them financial support because of these conflicting technicalities.

- In response to the aforementioned situation, some of the advice given were:
 - Suggest the use of the LGU's general fund and not the special education fund (SEF).
 - Apply for the school to be accredited instead in the other division where it is asking for assistance.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

Some suggested strategies that can be used to engage stakeholders:

- Through PTAs, encourage parents of children with disabilities to work together in gathering information and materials that would help their own children. Parents should talk to one another to exchange strategies on how to raise children with disabilities.
- Every year in July, the Philippines celebrates the National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week. Such events and activities help raise awareness about the issues on disability, and encourage the participation of stakeholders.
- Partners can be encouraged to contribute by: sponsoring parties and other school activities for kids; and participating in Brigada Eskwela (School Brigade), which is an annual activity where partners help clean up the school in time for the opening of classes.
- In gathering more support for the SPED program, the children's talents are showcased.
- Perform community scanning. Identify, in particular, stakeholders who are passionate about the school's programs. Send letters to all possible stakeholders identified during the scanning. Meet with them one by one and make sure that the first meeting will be one they will not forget. Give them your most authentic smile. Do not underestimate anyone who enters the school gate because everyone is a possible stakeholder.
- Organize stakeholders into a formal group (e.g., School Governing Council) which can help tap their own networks for more assistance.
- Conduct a stakeholders' forum where the school can explain and advocate for their programs and where stakeholders can publicly commit their resources.
- Spread wings to areas beyond one's community (e.g., friends abroad, other cities and villages, corporate offices, Metrobank).
- Promote incentives that can entice stakeholders to help. But for some stakeholders, simply receiving certificates is enough incentive for them to help.
- Use social media to call out to parents and other stakeholders for assistance in school activities.
- Engage stakeholders through research. For instance, one private school linked up with organizations which support issues of people with disabilities and was able to get funding for their research.

- Use the 3 As and provide activities that would tackle each:
 - Awareness - Orient all stakeholders on inclusive education.
 - Acceptance – If both internal and external stakeholders are aware already, work on their acceptance of the marginalized sectors.
 - Accommodation – They should be willing to accommodate these sectors and integrate them into the mainstream.

S3J

Information and Communications Technology in Early Learning

Parenting the Alpha Generation or Google Kids

#technology

#generations

Convener: Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council

Participants: Zenaída Domingo, Simon James, Chhayyuth Chhorn, Laraine dela Torre, Val Amiel Vestil, Prescilla Tulipat, Marisol Mendelivar, Jackie Lou Tayaban, Carissa Ramirez, Elisa Suarez, Katrina Libron, Shailini Gestosani, Monica Ann Poliquit

Documenter: Robert Daulat

Summary of Discussions:

- From a parent perspective, ICT poses dangers as distractions in forming healthy study habits. To use ICT as a study tool and aid in values formation, parents can use control applications to impose agreements with their children. Time tracking and screening of sites and content is important, and children must understand why these limits and rules are imposed. Guidance on proper use of ICT is important for both parents and children.
- In schools, use of ICT is encouraged but limited to learning domains. Holistic development should still be prioritized; ICT should serve as tools to encourage this, not to limit. Teachers, as second parents, should impose and set agreements with their pupil in the same manner.
- To decide which applications to use, read reviews and try out the apps personally before exposing to children.
- In Cambodia, children use ICT to improve reading, writing, listening. However, in rural areas, there is only limited opportunities to use ICT. There should be cooperation with schools to manage the ICT use of the students (e.g., time limit of using gadgets, tracking of use of apps).
- Studies on computer addiction vis-à-vis student performance/dropout? A study on computer addiction vis-à-vis student performance in Cambodia suggested measures to decrease school dropouts, but ICT was not traced as a cause of dropouts. The

participants from the Philippines do not know any local studies on such topic.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Teachers and parents should be technology-adept as well so they can properly impose limits to the children. The challenge is to prepare the children for a world that may be vastly different from what exists today—teach values, habits, and skills that could transcend current context and can be useful in various worlds.
- Teachers should take time to learn technology to help them teach. More senior teachers are somewhat averse to learning technology and receiving instruction from younger, more technology-adept colleagues. Teacher training is paramount. Self-reflection is important in teachers to know how to improve their teaching.
- Technology is a tool; hence children should also be taught how to use it as such, along with finding alternatives. The inquisitive mind should be nurtured, like the notion of research.
- Regarding content, as the internet is massive, there should be efforts to look for existing alternatives or choices on useful content.
- Technology makes good teachers better, bad teachers worse. Not all instruction comes from the internet, teachers should still diversify, contextualize, and prioritize what learners need.

S3K

How the Four Pillars of Balanced and Inclusive Education Transform Education Systems

#educationsystem

Convener: Sheikh Manssour Bin Mussallam

Participants: Gerald Magno, Aileen Ballaran, Michelle Dulay, Ma. Cecilia Dajoyag-Arcadio, Margaret Yayi Fua, Jocelyn Tuguinayo, Noemi Lim, Mirafior Presillas, Marieber Pulvera, Danilo Ungang, Chandler Ibabao, Thea Mercado, Melissa Borela, Irene Marie Malabanan, Catalina Cordeta, Elsa Tabudlong, Annalyn Soriano, Eloisa Garsi, Kimberly Macadangdang, Lito Adanza, Rolando Juanillo, Nur Masturah Ibrahim, Monishah Shah, Florielyn Antalan, Wenefredo Rubio, Arthur Perez, Celedonio Danda, Kathryn Abaño, Erma Jamon, Juanita Morato, Jose Tuguinayo Jr., Joseph Ryan Lansangan, Marvin Alde, Raquel Callangan, Krupskaya Anonuevo, Dove Estor, Angelika Jabines, Teresa Felipe, Adelina Velasco, Nimfa Maca, Ligaya Bautista, Jupiter Petilla, Niraphone Keobounlome, Bouavanh Lusa, Roland Diaz, Jennifer Asing, Evangeline Asuncion, Nor Asurah Haji Meluddin, Nadzida Mohd Nadzim, Nonie Ahaddas, Dean Ric Endriano, Hannah Mae Aldeza, Rowaydah Ibrahim, Maria Nessa Espina, Philip Purnell

Documenter: Aury Atienza-Santos

Summary of Discussions:

- The four pillars of balanced and inclusive education are not entirely new, when taken separately, with the exception of intra-culturalism. What is new is that these have been brought together to define what balanced and inclusive education is. The 4 pillars serve as the theoretical framework that synthesizes a framework, principles, and mechanisms, not exact policies—the latter depend on regional, national, and local stakeholders.
- Several examples were cited to explain and demonstrate the significance of the four pillars of BIE.

Dialecticism

- Today, the teacher is the protagonist, the guardian of knowledge, but in the age of technology and democratized access to information, the teacher must become a facilitator of knowledge and a dialectical midwife bridging the gap that capacitates students.
- Recognizing that this is now the age of technology, it is crucial for students to have the capacity, the skills to process information that abounds because of access to technology. Students should be able to process information, be selective, and be critical in selecting information available to them. They should be able to discern what is more relevant and valuable to them.

- In dialectical setting, the students themselves become the protagonist in the classroom.

Transdisciplinarity

- In a transdisciplinary approach, we recognise that it is no longer sufficient to address challenges by the lens of a single discipline. This is not recognized in traditional education. Take for instance the schedule of students that are completely segregated. We need to blur in the classroom those rigid sections between/ among the segregated subjects.

Intraculturalism

- We need to be able to understand our world through the history of knowledge. What emanates from history is that no civilization was built independently; rather, there is the blending in of different cultures, civilizations. All our civilizations, cultures, nations are already the result of millennia of diversity and intercultural exchange.
- We need to unveil these exchanges by re-perceiving history. History should not just be understood exclusively from the political perspective but also through the lens of knowledge.

Contextuality

- In terms of contextuality, I cannot tell you exactly what it will look like because that is the job of the regional, national and local stakeholders such as the educators themselves, to

be able to contextualize to each country and locality's realities and aspirations. Balanced education is contextual. It is, therefore, defined best by those living within a specific context.

- The teachers need to be devolved sufficient authority to contextualize the content and curricula. The pedagogical training of teachers must enable them to utilise the mechanisms of contextualization and apply the principles in the classroom.
- The teacher becomes fully invested in the process of learning. There is absolutely no contextualization of learning unless the teacher is fully invested
- True contextualization is a gradual process similar to a cascade: international agreement on principles, regional contextualization, national contextualization and so forth until one reaches the level of the schools and, I would go so far as to say, the individuality of students.
- ERF is opening the conversations based on each of the pillars of BIE. From these conversations, the experiences from its regional meetings were documented both in terms best practices and failures. These were presented at ERF's Forum BIE2030.
- Having received an international mandate, ERF is now developing a Global Guide for BIE. This guide, however, should be further contextualized and the mechanism for doing so will be expounded within the guide.
- Most often, people look at education as results-oriented. We need to understand students in a more holistic environment. Are we trying to merely produce good mathematicians or good human beings who are also good in mathematics?
- Balanced education is a result of the contributions of all stakeholders of education in the society.
- We need to have an approach that is both local and global. The conversations about education that has happened before are more Western, even the Singaporean model of education patterns itself from Western practices. There are some cutting-edge developments from Global South countries that share the same challenges (like diversity of languages) but these are almost never discussed in international conversations. We should create platforms for policies that are transnational. We should enable the discussion of different systems.
- The convenor said he is always careful not to device policies based on the four pillars. "It is not in my place to determine what a teacher should be capable of doing because I am not a teacher. They would be best to contextualize pedagogies on their own, within international, regional, national, and local frameworks."

- Balanced education: how do we know when this has been achieved? Can it be balanced but not inclusive? Or can it be inclusive and not balanced?
 - Inclusivity is a complex matter which cannot be reduced to access to an education, as you may, for instance, have an entire population that has access to education, but the education itself may be alienating to the entire schooled population.
 - The four pillars represent a balanced education system. One way of achieving inclusivity is by having a balanced education system. It is an education system where teachers and students are not alienated, rather they are co-partners, co-owners of the education they produce/receive.
 - One of the problems with result-based education is a student can get high grades from passing an exam, yet if you asked that student the same questions a few weeks later, there is high probability that the student has forgotten the answers already.
 - Contextualization is a key to achieving a balanced and inclusive education
- The product of a balanced and inclusive education can be best defined by the people within a specific context. It cannot be defined for them by others. The context in Southeast Asia is very different from the context in Europe or in other parts of the world. However, a student that is a product of a balanced and inclusive education would most likely be open to the world, whilst grounded in the community. The student would most likely be a productive member of the society, has concern on the progress of culture and allows it to move forward.
- It is a valid belief that we may not all be capable of receiving a particular holistic approach to education but that is why contextualized processes to a holistic education are crucial: because the way we learn is different from one another because of our different backgrounds.
- The greatest measure of success will be someone who will be a productive member of the society.
- Role of religion in achieving holistic education: The convenor personally does not believe that merely stating that upholding one's religion will make one a balanced person to necessarily be true, because it depends on how one interprets one's religion: is it radical, excluding of others, or is it moderate, open to others? However, including religion in education, due to the belief that religion makes a holistic person is an evident example of contextualization on the part of a region, nation, locality.
- Balanced and Inclusive Education does not exist in a vacuum, a void: it should be accompanied by holistic, humanistic and progressive policies.
- Are developmentally appropriate ways of teaching children contributory to inclusive education?
 - This would fall under the pillar of contextualization. The way of teaching students also needs to be restudied and re-perceived.

We must be sensitive to the developmental needs of students. It may be worth exploring other avenues...I cannot tell you, in absolute terms, what is appropriate and what is not... there is no concrete global answer. Personally, in general, I think it could actually be problematic. It (developmentally appropriate teaching) can reinforce the differences among students. Mostly because of regrouping students depending on the abilities, you are not necessarily enable them to progress.

- The 4 pillars serve as guideposts. The principles can be applied through the curriculum. There are existing tools in the Philippines that apply one or two disciplines of these pillars. For instance, there is focus on how to contextualize education based on the specific contexts. The pillars of BIE are more of a cross between existentialist and progressivism theories. One should be able to contribute to the progress of the society that one belongs. The translation to the classroom is when the curriculum developers look at the different contexts of the students.
- There is a lot of intellectual discourse as regards the four pillars of BIE. It is a complex matter. How can this be practically applied in the education system? As educators, we simply look at contents, skills, assessments, and as educators we have to recommend to policy makers, what kind of major change are you looking at

- PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) is the worst kind of assessment. Different countries are being compared on the same results of that assessment, with no consideration to contextualization of processes, even when each country has a different context. Hence, the importance of reimagining assessment tools to better capture the reality.
- “The limits of my world are the limits of my language.” Finding a common language, such as the intellectual discourse of the four pillars, enables the development of policies on balanced and inclusive education.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Based on the recommendation of different stakeholders, ERF will come up with different measures/tools in its global guide which will determine what a balanced and inclusive education is in concrete terms. In an upcoming conference that ERF is holding in Cuba, it is expected that there will be a sharing of best practices, followed by the launch of the global guide.

S3L

Differentiated Instruction is Localized and Contextualized

#classroominstruction

Convener: Madilen Espiritu

Participants: Josephine Bernardino, James Roldan, Ephraim M. Membrere, Ignaas Demyttenaere, Andrea Pineda, Noemi Lim, Marieber Pulvera, Milagros Postrano, Ana Luna, Alejandro Rendon, Feliciano Valle, Marco Suson, Rogin Christ Eribal, Josephh Ryan Lansangan, Evangeline Asuncion

Documenter: Eunilaine Bagalihog

Summary of Discussions:

- The needs of a group of diverse students must be addressed—other than their teaching and learning needs.
- Use different set of activities: group students into small groups; objectives of the activities are the same; students get to share their ideas.
- Learners have different learning styles—there is no standard learning style. Other students with diverse needs such as the blind and deaf also have different learning styles.
- For the same competencies, teachers can provide differentiated activities. Teachers should be aware of the different types of learning groups in the class—multiple intelligence exam. However, there is no teacher training to provide differentiated instruction.
- Everybody has to learn the same thing, and everybody has the capacity to learn the same thing.
- The problem is not the excluded but the excluders.
- Modify the content to fit the context of the students—value the culture. Students should have a choice—cooperative learning.
- Some teachers understand differentiated instruction as teaching students based on their interests.
- Motivation is important.
- Emotion is also important; for example, teachers in the current school setting use fear to make students study and participate in school activities. On the other hand, teachers are also intimidated of their principal.
- Another issue is the class size but there are teachers who are trained to handle big classes.
- Get ideas from culture—coordinate with the local government units.
- There is an authentic interaction if different groups of people are combined together in a class (e.g., people who come from different culture, religion); the class becomes a safe space where people are not afraid to express themselves.
- There is still the notion that teachers are the only ones who impart knowledge to the students. When the student starts to teach the teachers, that's when learning takes place.

- Teach students to collate the data and make sense of the information they have collected.
- Classrooms are not student-centered; start encouraging students to become bumblebees and butterflies—to become more active in the classrooms and engage with teacher and fellow students.
- Provide stimuli that would encourage students to ask questions; give students a safe space to ask questions.
- Lesson should be simplified and related to the context of the learner.
- Resources are everywhere; organize and balance the different skills of the learners in the class.
- Before the start of a school year, there should be a list of the interests of the learners to guide the teachers in making lessons and activities enjoyable for the students.
- We should not force tasks to our learners; they should be given enough time to prepare and be motivated to perform any task.
- Education is not meant to change culture; education should be anchored in the culture.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Train school heads and teachers about differentiated instruction
- Reduce administrative tasks given to teachers to allot more time to teaching.
- Encourage students to ask questions

S3M

Project MIRACLE

Multi-Integration of Resources to Augment Community and Learner Equity

#inclusivecommunity

Convener: Lanie Socorro

Participants: Jennifer Joson, Shella Navarro

Documenter: Mylene Dones

Summary of Discussions:

- School-based Feeding Program (SBPF)
 - The Philippine government through the DepEd, provides each child with PHP 16.00 per day for its School-based Feeding Program (SBPF) (SY 2017-2022), which targets wasted (W) and severely wasted (SW) students.
 - The SBPF aims to “improve the nutritional status of the beneficiaries by at least 70% at the end of 120 days.” It also aims to “increase classroom attendance by 85% to 100%, and improve the children’s health and nutrition values and behavior.” (D.O. 39, s. 2017)
- Project MIRACLE
 - Project MIRACLE or Multi Integration of Resources to

Augment Community and Learner Equity is a school-head initiated program that adopted the nutrition program of the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction called Integrated Nutrition Program, which advocates the cultivation and production of indigenous vegetables to sustain the nutritional health of rural communities.

- The school that piloted Project MIRACLE now plants and harvest indigenous vegetables such as talinum, Japanese malunggay, yellow eggplant, turmeric and all varieties of camote (orange, white, yellow, violet) in its school backyard, thereby feeding not just the W and SW students, but everyone.
- The school capacitated teachers and parents (especially those who are recipients of the government's 4Ps) on the technologies necessary in planting these indigenous vegetables.
- The school also came up with Gulayan sa Kariton which sold the produce and cuttings of said indigenous vegetables to the community.
- The success of the program is due to the support of the school management and personnel, parents, LGU and community. At present, many stakeholders are helping out in sustaining the school's vegetable garden,

and the school is able to feed all students—the miracle of integration.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Because the vegetable gardens are now self-sustaining, the sixteen-peso daily budget per child is now spent to buy white meat (chicken) as vegetables are sourced from the gardens for free.
- The school has also forayed into vertical gardens and aquaponics.
- Since the inception of the project in June 2017, its first harvest in November 2017, and the most recent weighing of its students last January 2018, it has been found that only 31 of the initial 140 students are underweight.
- The school head continues to involve parents in ensuring that students have access to nutritious meals through its self-sustaining vegetable gardens.

S3N

Inclusive Education Practices Based on Experience

#inclusiveteachers

#educationssystem

Convener: Jeanette Naval

Participants: Joan Lagata, Diana Cynthia Gutierrez, Ma. Giselle Montero, Regine Lapidez, Janette Lacson, Hyacinth Annjoy Legaspi, Kyaw Lwin, Emely Pelobello, Leahgracia Velayo, Franco Teves, Joan Belga, Rosella Torrecampo, Rex Bernardo, Joseph Ryan Lansangan

Documenter: Regina Peñarroyo

Summary of Discussions:

- The best practices in inclusion are:
 - Ensuring that the students are well-distributed
 - Using differentiated instruction—there is a different activity for each child that suits his or her strengths and interests
 - Anecdotal and prescriptive assessment
 - Having a dedicated office or center for inclusive education (i.e., College of St. Benilde's Center for Inclusive Education which offers a degree in Applied Deaf Studies)
- Teacher training for inclusivity and building a culture of inclusion
- Inclusion is necessary in special education because education remains a privilege for learners with special needs. Accessibility is a challenge because most centers are in the urban areas. Some teachers do not recognize that a learner has special needs especially if the child is undiagnosed.
- Inclusive practice is a must; still, there are some issues in inclusive education:
 - Some teachers are not well-equipped to address learning disabilities—in which learning action cells (LACs) can help.
 - Inclusivity is seen as additional work; there is resistance due to insecurity of being inadequate, but teachers must understand and persist.
 - Special kids belong to marginalized families are not diagnosed. There is a lack of special education teachers, too.
 - Special education is being addressed in basic education but remains a problem in high school and college. In K-12, there is no clear entry point for students with disabilities—the modules are not tailored for students with disabilities. In higher education, for instance, the University of the Philippines College Admission Test (UPCAT) is not available in Braille. Moreover, university professors and instructors are

content experts but might have limited pedagogical knowledge in special education.

- Disabilities are not always seen—how do we include those with psycho-social issues, depression, and social anxiety? These forms of disabilities must be recognized too.
- There is a lack of support, budget, and resources for SPED.
- Some students are mixed in mainstream classes but they may still be excluded—just quiet participants who are going with the flow instead of their learning needs being addressed.
- Any act of inclusion may also result to some form of exclusion.
- Standards can be a barrier to exclusion because our standards are based on regular students—some children might not be ready for board exams and standardized exams.
- There is an issue on how we measure success. Graduating from college is not true or possible for every person. We need to recognize potentials and give learners many options.

Technical-Vocational (tech-voc) skills and national certifications are options too. Still, the tech-voc curriculum must be improved and these skills most often lead to low-paying jobs so if possible, push learners to aim higher.

College is not the only exit point—let us shift our mindset regarding success.

- Capacitate the schools, raise awareness, and promote acceptance

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Translate our ideas to clear resolutions that we can submit to DepEd, CHED, and other organizations
- We need to come up with short-term and long term strategies
 - Short-term strategies can be at the level of the teacher and the administration
 - Long-term strategies should include policies
- We have to rethink innovative and inclusive standards.
- Accept everybody and do not label; build a culture of respect for everyone.
- Teamwork and cooperative learning can erase labels of disabilities.
- Improve the teaching profession so that all teachers have SPED capacity to address learning disabilities, instead of just adding SPED teachers. This can be addressed by including SPED training in the undergrad curriculum for teacher education.
- Exploit the potentials, do not focus on limitations
- Teacher has a key role: they must be trained in picking out the student's context—is it a behavioral problem? Emotional distress? Mental health issue? Then create a safe space for students experiencing these.

S30

Creating a Child-Friendly School that Humanizes and Nurtures

#inclusivecommunity

Convener: Wiwik Indriyani Hadi Mulyono

Participants: Quynh Doan Thi Hai, Eko Lesmono, Kamonthep Chungchoo, Gaudencio Rodelas, Mae Dumapig, Richard Subia

Documenter: Febbie Ibatuan

Summary of Discussions:

- Student discipline is a critical factor in maintaining a safe environment for students and staff. One of the areas in managing students is to look at their behavior. The challenge as a school head is to initiate an action that will transform students with disruptive behaviors through child-friendly programs. This entails a change in teaching, curriculum, facilities and the involvement of stakeholders.
- The convener shared her experience as a school head in confronting conflicts:
 - **School policies and programs.** Consult the parents, students, and government officials on the policies and regulations in handling students with disciplinary issues. Research on child intervention programs to have a baseline information for the counselling group focusing on the needs of these students. Identify standard operational procedure in handling these students. Partner with different stakeholders in implementing the program and form different committees for the monitoring.
 - **Child intervention programs.** The convener initiated the Teach Factory program where students can learn how to weave, garden, and make arts and crafts—which enhances not only their skills but also their character. A literacy corner was formed in every classroom where students can read books, draw, and play. Occasionally, parents and volunteers hold a storytelling session. Before going to classrooms, the students read the Koran, say a prayer, and greet the teachers.
 - **Impact of the programs.** The initial goal of the programs is to keep the students occupied to stop poor behavior; but after some time, there is a significant improvement on the dropout rate—the 10-20% dropped to 0.15% after 2 years.
- Students improve not only in their behavior but in their academics as well
- Local government have recognized the innovations that they implemented and have won awards

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Other schools can also adopt and modify the actions and programs that the school implemented.

S3P

Empowering Teachers and Making Them Lifelong Learners

#inclusiveteachers

#lifelonglearning

Convener: Herawati Diah
Kusumaningrum

Participants: Romina Bautista, Liza
Libertine Magana, Zulfajri Basri
Hasanuddin, Adeline Luarez, David Evans

Documenter: Nathaniel Lumbré

Summary of Discussions:

- In Indonesia, not all provinces have inclusive schools; although they have informal schools that teach children with special needs.
- In the Philippines, the DepEd curriculum is being followed but some schools have their own life skill programs and values lessons. Also, values formation is different from life skills training; it is done effectively and independently.
- In the Philippines, parents are informed about the situations regarding their children through the Parent-Teacher Association. The problem is some parents are in denial of their children's special needs.
- In the Philippines, a special school is treating both regular students and those with disabilities in inclusive classes. It is hard to empower students if the teachers are not capable of delivering these subjects and competencies. Also, some schools do not have support teachers to be responsible for the children with special needs.
- When the Philippines started the program for inclusive education, they just dived in and labeled it as such when it is totally not. The complexity of these inclusive classes makes the teachers feel different, scared and threatened.
- In US, SPED teachers are handling children with special needs in class while each of these students has their own specific teachers.
- In Indonesia, classes are transferred from one location to another. In result, both the teachers and students are challenged and hindered in terms of personal development.
- In Indonesia, teachers are evaluated annually and if they can not meet their requirements, the government (central and district) will suspend the professional allowance. They can get it in the next year upon fulfilment of the requirements.
- In Australia, every teacher is trained to be inclusive as mandated by law.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- The passion to teach these children is very important—the Constitution demands that all children have

the right to education. We need to empower the teachers and students to make the community better.

- Inclusive schools increase self-confidence and character building among students.
- Parents and all members of the family are responsible for developing a nature of learning.
- Teachers should be more inclusive and embrace the different skills and talents of their students. They should be the first to empower their students despite their disabilities. Along with the students, the teachers who will build the inclusive community should also be supported.
- We need more trainers that are educated and familiar with the various interventions and delivery in inclusive education (e.g., differentiated instruction, etc.).
- The Philippines needs to develop policies that will define inclusive education.
- We should develop eagerness for continuous education—continuing professional development. School heads should encourage their teachers through passion and incentives. There should be teachers needs assessment to determine the trainings that they will undergo for the year—lifelong learning is improving their personal skills.

S3R

Community Mapping and Tools for Dialogue and Learning Among Youth and Community

#inclusivecommunity

Convener: Thea Soriano

Participants: Victor Fedirigan, Rosa Olafsson, Nitin Madhav Paranjape, Miriam Coprado, Yinri Esmera Corpuz, Patria May-i Pedrosa Maluping, Anunciacion Pagdilao, Nofriza Yesmita, Isidora Happy Apsari, Joan Castillo, Ma. Jezza Castillo, Sonali Kailas Tongare, Rogan Jahari, Carling Dumulot, Pateng Louanlamoun, Xomsihapanya Dokkham, Joelyn Soldevilla-Biag, Ildebrando Caday, Theresa Jane Mendoza, Aurelio Alvarez, Robert Rebamontan, Ronald Celino, Gumpanat Boriboon, Marjoe Floranda, Tun Tun Min, Isabelita Borrres, Aldila Filomenita Bajuyo

Documenter: Emmy Yanga-Domingo

Summary of Discussions:

Vision of Education

- The session started with the participants sharing their vision of education:
 - Every child should be nurtured with love, affection, and care because these values will be shared with others.

- All learners and stakeholders should accept one another.
- For the Aeta community in Zambales, their vision is to establish a strong indigenous school. Most staff are volunteers and do not have salaries. It is proposed to increase the government support in IP schools, especially in providing more instructional materials on how to teach the curriculum and meals for learners.

Youth-led Action Research

- ASPBAE shared the tools used in their initiatives on youth-led action research—wherein young people design, gather, and analyze data.
- They shared the three Vs of research—voice, vision, and valor. They believe that action research empowers the young people to voice out their concerns as individuals and as communities.
- Some tools are a combination of tools such as surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), but what is unique is that the tools are designed with questions coming from the young people. Action research provides them opportunities to be valued.
- The following ASPBAE youth-led action researches were then shared with the group:
 - India. Young people use research tools developed by the community members—which were considered more powerful because it came from the community itself. One of tools used was cultural

mapping, which shows which communities are found inside, and which ones are found outside, locations of houses, availability of facilities, locations of economic establishments, religious institutions, cultural spaces, etc. Maps are reflections of realities of the communities. It was noted that cultural mapping is contingent on guide questions and may be used as a tool in addressing questions concerning women.

- Philippines. One of the most remarkable research tools used by the youth in the Philippines is the compilation of life stories of the young researchers themselves. It provided many insightful lessons about the young people. They also did community mapping and it was considered significant because it provides a status of the community, e.g., available facilities—wherein they learn that some communities actually lack facilities on lifelong learning. FGDs is another important tool that was used to share recommendations and suggestions in research. They also used interviews in FGDs and learned that they need to modify them after pre-testing.

In Northern Samar, there are health researchers who are designated to 12 barangays and meet regularly to share results. During youth camps, findings of research were presented to fellow youth; there were sessions on poetry writing, story telling,

kwentong buhay, waray poetry making, and playing local instruments in story telling.

In Quezon City, they use theater workshop as a tool since some participants cannot read nor write. This tool empowers them better to ask questions and to tell their stories. Aside from theater, the participants also express themselves through singing, dancing, debating, and spoken words; through this, interviewers were able to ask provocative questions.

For Aeta communities in Zambales, community mapping helped in identifying spaces to build their new homes and learning centers.

- Indonesia. Aside from cultural mapping, young Indonesian researchers also used census and surveys to inquire in the neighbourhood about their issues.

Challenges

- Some challenges for the young researchers are distance and accessibility of research sites. They also mentioned the parents' anxiety about youth's mobility, respondents' reluctance to answer researchers' questions, as well as bullying because usually the communities look for donations from them. Although it helps that they have identification cards (IDs) as researchers to show that they are supported by organizations.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Action research should be encouraged among youth so they are empowered to let their voices be heard and to participate in decision-making in their respective communities;
- Results of researches should be a way to change the lives in the communities; it is suggested that these will be conveyed to the education officials to support their project proposals.
- In Lao PDR, the voices of the young women are not heard; thus, action research will be a powerful tool to empower them and change their situation.

S4A

Inclusive Education for the Indigenous Peoples in Mindanao

#indigenypeoples

Convener: Danilo Ungang

Participants: Marvin Alde, Arthur Perez, Celedonio Danda, Erwin Felipe

Documenter: Benedict Santos

Summary of Discussions:

- The Subanen is fifty years behind in terms of education and economy; it does not have access to basic social services like primary and secondary education—only fifty percent of the tribe is able to attend school.
- Not all schools for indigenous peoples in Mindanao follow a culture-based curriculum.
- The Subanen people are peace-loving but because of lack of access to education, members of the tribe are recruited by rebel groups.
- Importance of education should be emphasized among the members of the Subanen tribe.
- The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) is not enough to sustain the education of the Subanen children. Also, the lack of schools and teachers for the implementation of senior high school program in Mindanao contributes to the low passing rate of the students—senior high is only available in major cities.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- There should be a program supported by the DepEd intended for the preservation of the culture of the Subanen tribe. There should be culture-based education for indigenous groups—the Subanen in particular.
- Provide scholarship and financial aid for students from indigenous groups. Propose budget allocation specifically for financial aid for students coming from indigenous groups.
- Eradicate discrimination against indigenous groups
- Prioritize hiring of teachers from the tribe to facilitate the contextualization and localization of the curriculum based on the culture. The teachers should be trained for the said contextualization.
- To help the indigenous group financially, a livelihood program for the Subanen should be developed and rolled out; ancestral lands should also be granted to the indigenous peoples. Local government units and tribal leaders can negotiate with mining companies in Mindanao to support the education of the indigenous peoples.
- Indigenous groups need sustainable education program and trainings in family planning.
- Sustainable education program for adults coming from indigenous groups

- The tracks offered in the senior high school program should be strengthened and tailored to suit the skills and competencies of the indigenous students and their culture.

S4B

Understanding Adolescents

#youth

Convener: Teresita Felipe

Participants: Monica Ann Poliquit, Maria Veronica Perez, Marielle Ferrer, Romina Bautista, Ma. Cecilia Dajoyag-Arcadio, Kel, Yolanda Delas Alas, Owen Peña

Documenter: Jessie Yamson

Summary of Discussions:

- These are some of the issues concerning adolescents nowadays:
 - Classrooms are not adapted to their needs
 - Technology is distracting
 - Processes in education system that excludes them
 - Bullying and abusive behavior
 - Changing environment and rapid maturity
 - School dropouts and teenage pregnancies
 - Risky online behaviors

- Family problems
- Mental health problems—depression, suicidal tendencies
- To help address some of these issues:
 - The family must be informed about their children's lives, but still setting boundaries for self-regulation. The parents can improve their parenting skills through seminars which considers the family's context. The ideas and opinions of the adolescents must be respected, and they should be involved in informed decision making. It is important to maintain a healthy and open communication with each other.
 - For the school, guidance counselling must be strengthened—create a safe place where they can express themselves without judgement. This will also help them deal with stress that may lead to mental health issues. It is suggested to set up an approach to listen to the students in the condition of anonymity. Also, implement curricular activities that addresses risky online behaviors—social media safety and data privacy, among others.
 - For the community, there should be youth peers and adult mentors to guide the adolescents. Advocate and strengthen social and emotional learning among the youth. Consider limiting the use of technology to experience the real world.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Social and emotional learning must be strengthened.
- Engage youth in problem solving, meaningful activities both in the classroom and the community (i.e., volunteerism, peacebuilding, arts, sports, etc.).

S4C

Teaching the Average

#classroominstruction

Convener: Owen Peña

Participants: Carissa Ramirez, Marisol Mendelivar, Jackie Lou Tayaban, Margaret Mary Rosary Carmel Fua, Yolanda Delas Alas, Zenaida Domingo, Monique Adalem, Rem Tanauan, Dove Estor

Documenter: Regina Peñarroyo

Summary of Discussions:

- We are forgetting the “average” – they are the faceless marginalized students in the school. The average makes up 80% of our class – 10% are the fast learners and 10% are the slow learners. Sometimes they are physically present but are not learning.
- One way to teach the average is to make sure that all students are engaged—total participation technique (TPT). Teacher must

always see to it that there is 100% participation from the beginning of the class.

- Questions that only target specific persons or groups is counter-productive
- Student engagement can tell teachers to shift gears: Will you continue? Will you do it differently?
- Using pictures can engage students—students can illustrate their learning and their ideas
- Disengagement
 - Question and answer techniques engage only a few students
 - Teacher’s effectiveness has direct impact on what students learn
 - TPT allows students to become actively involved in learning and be more focused.
- The purpose of TPT is to aim for deeper learning and engagement; it uses Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) because this increases cognitive engagement.
- A TPT Cognitive Engagement Model

3 High Cognition/ Low Participation	4 High Cognition/ High Participation
1 Low Cognition/ Low Participation	2 Low Cognition/ High Participation

The TPT model promotes the 4th quadrant.

- Teachers have structural constraints: many students, limited time. To address this issue, teachers can work in small groups or try differentiated instruction.
- Mass trainings do not work; other strategies such as satellite learning groups must be enforced.
- Let students group themselves and have someone act as teachers. Through this, students will learn how to manage themselves and those who end up with no groups will be supervised by the teacher.
- I teach, we teach, you teach – and induction program for new teachers
 - I teach – model teaching
 - We teach – team teaching
 - You teach – the new teacher is now ready to manage the classroom
 - But how does this differ from immersion? Although immersion and apprenticeship are good and effective, the DepEd cannot afford these.
- Average students are not really struggling—they are not really left behind, but they are left where they are, and the potential is not tapped.
- In one province, scholarships were given to the average students. However, the program caused stigma because they are “just average” students and not the academically excellent ones. To address this stigma, multiple intelligences is used—learners who are average can excel in other fields aside from academic.

Although scholarships are not for the average, opportunities should also be given to everyone.

- Another aspect of disengagement is the structure and scheduling of classes—students do not get the opportunity to weave and process their learnings, especially if you shift to different subjects within a short amount of time.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- There must be policies to give teachers some freedom to make decisions. This is a more realistic and responsive education instead of teachers blindly following the modules they need to teach, and it will address constraints in creativity.
- The heart of education is the teacher—we must strengthen them and give them the power to decide.
- Tips to the teachers: 3 Ps—prepare, prepare, and prepare—always have a plan.
- We are so hung up on excellence based on grades and high IQ, but we should look at everyone as equal who all deserve to be given opportunities
- Curriculum must be contextualized to address our average learners

S4D

Strategies in Teaching a Class with Students with Special Needs

#classroominstruction

#diverseneeds

Convener: Shella Navarro

Participants: Janette Lacson, Gaudencio Rodelas, Hanh Doan Thi Thuy, Quynh Doan Thi Hai, Razaleigh Kate Jumawan, Diana Cynthia Gutierrez, Regine Lapidez, Hyacinth Annjoy Legaspi, Joseph Ryan Lansangan

Documenter: Genesis Montero

Summary of Discussions:

- DepEd Order for inclusive education DO. 72 S. 2009 poses a problem for regular teachers who have many students with diverse needs.
- As a SPED teacher, there is a need to look at inclusion that goes beyond including the children with diverse needs in the physical sense—it must be quality learning. Certain strategies must be employed to accommodate these children.
 - Maybe lessening the number of regular students would help teachers accommodate the children with special needs.

However, the limited resources and facilities, especially in public schools, makes this difficult.

- Another way is to divide students in small groups when tackling technical subjects like math and distributing children with special education needs among these classes.
- Instead of differentiating and labelling the kids, look at their strengths. The activities are differentiated for students. Teachers are challenged to meet the DepEd standards and excel it—no pull out, no shadow teachers. Children decide their way of learning and are encouraged to decide what they wish to learn. The only intervention of teachers commit to is differentiated teaching.

Sign language is not encouraged for deaf kids because it will discriminate students. The peers help one another and form their own way of communication with children with needs.

- There should be teacher training to equip teachers with the necessary skills to accommodate children with special needs.
- For children who are undiagnosed of their learning difficulties, there are skills assessment to gauge the learning ability and knowledge of kids; afterwards, these children can be paired up with skilled kids. To make parents aware of the actual status of their child and level of learning, they are asked once a month to handle classes as para-teachers. If teachers do not have a

background in special education, the school must adapt to the needs of the children.

- Special education unit requirements have been arising in different universities.
- Teachers must be allowed to modify their lessons to adapt to the needs of the students. The strategy must always be learner-centered, not school or curriculum-centered.
- Employ anecdotes and rubrics instead of a grading system. However, numerical grades can be produced using the rubric when needed.
- As an example, Jose Abad Santos Memorial School have produced student graduates with honors in different universities. They also group children based on age, rather than on IQ. This is paired up with home trainings which is geared to respond to parents and other people in homes.
- To assist in handling a class with mixed students, there is a Universal Design for Learning which has different means of learning: expression and engagement.
- Classroom design helps with the facilitation of learning.

S4F

Creating and Sustaining a Network of Support for Inclusive Education

#inclusivecommunity

#promotinginclusion

Convener: Jupiter Petilla

Participants: Tricia Mariza Mercado, Annalyn Aquino, Irene Marie Malabanan, Melissa Borela

Documenter: Robert Daulat

Summary of Discussions:

- Main focus was on the role of school head in maintaining meaningful relationships with stakeholders
- Successful inclusive education is a “marriage of stakeholders and school”
- School heads should be engaging leaders
 - Maintains open line of communication with teachers
 - Supportive and facilitative of action from subordinates
 - Respectful and empowering
 - Has strong political will, but can also inspire people to take action on their own

- Charisma is a good quality of a leader, but not necessarily essential
- Direction, facilitation, firmness. Leading a school is essentially “tough love”—being firm and decisive, but not at the cost of losing openness and warmth
- Parents are the most important stakeholders of schools.
- Inclusion is being welcoming. Being inclusive used to refer to SPED, but the conference opened the idea of inclusivity in many other facets.
- There should be meaningful partnerships between school-LGU-families

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- School head development programs should be implemented and, if present, improved
- School heads should always be aware of what their schools need and be assertive of such if needed.
- Communication should always be open between the school and the stakeholders. They should always be aware of what the school needs, as well as their value and importance to the betterment of the school.
- Leaders should have enough time to implement their plans of action but should also be ready to take on new challenges when needed. Leadership should be carried over to wherever a leader serves.

S4E

Assessment Tools in Evaluating the Performance of Students with Disabilities

#diverseneeds

Convener: Jennifer Joson

Participants: Mendato Marcaban, Chhayath Chhorn, Ma. Lanie Socorro, Sherlyne Acosta, Candra Penoliar, Hannah Rose Manaligod

Documenter: Eunilaine Bagalihog

Summary of Discussions:

- How to evaluate the academic performance of pupils with disabilities?
- In the Philippines, there are no standardized tools for students with disabilities yet; although, the DepEd is working on this. To start with, they are preparing the teachers on how to handle pupils with disabilities; there are specific schools identified as SPED schools.
- Today, the standard tool that DepEd uses for initial assessment and

classification is the Multi-Factor Assessment Tool (MFAT). Hence, the assessments that will be used in schools should be parallel to MFAT.

- It must be determined what will be assessed, how to assess, and who will be assessed. If pupils with disabilities will be included in the mainstream, there should be differentiated instruction as well as differentiated assessment.
- Teachers should be trained first on how to deal with pupils with disabilities or at least have a teaching assistant; better to have a SPED teacher in a class with SPED students.
- Cambodia is also very new in developing assessment tools for pupils with disabilities.
- In Cambodia, there is already a proposition to move students with disabilities to mainstream classes; based on the policy, there should be 10 SPED students to 1 teacher. Another concern is the distance of schools because travelling for pupils with disabilities may be difficult.
- In the Philippines, there is already a rubric for kindergarten in assessing students with disabilities.
- Some people have difficulty in performing activities because of their limited physical mobility but thinking skills are not affected.
- There is a problem with assessment—international assessments are created by developed countries.

- Students have to translate the questions to their mother tongue language to fully understand it.
- Assessments should be contextualized—there should be assessment tools appropriate for Southeast Asia.
- There is a misalignment between the skills taught in school and the skills being measured in international tests.
- We should repeal memorization; students now do not remember core concepts, but they remember activities.
- Regions are pitted against each other in the National Achievement Test; this sometimes results to principals instructing teachers to focus on specific subjects to ensure that the schools will excel in those subjects.
- Teachers are also given extra work which reduces their time in teaching
- The quality of school depends on the leadership of the school head

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- There should be SPED teachers handling SPED students or at least hire teaching assistants
- Train teachers to prepare them for SPED students
- There should be parallel contextualized assessments

S4G

Engaging the Parents in OSY Development

#youth

#parents

Convener: Rogin Christ Eribal

Participants: Vanna Sao, Sopheak Chhom, Porntip Uppatum, Phakamas Singjai, Nimfa Maca, Val Amiel Vestil, Aurelio Alvarez, Andrea Pineda, Eko Lesmono, Heng Sophann

Documenter: Nicole Asedillo

Summary of Discussions:

- It is important for schools not only to try developing the learners, but also to engage the parents in their development. The session discussed the current practices and program to engage the parents of the students.
- In Thailand, all schools have parent-teacher associations and have different strategies in engaging the parents. A private school in Bangkok, for example, asks the parents to come and visit the school for activities such as cooking clubs, photography, etc., which the parents themselves pay for. The response in this kind of activities is very good, as it helps them to see their child act in another environment.
- Also, the private school in Bangkok also conduct trainings for parents related to the development of their kids (e.g., love in teenage years, etc.). These are held once a month and are promoted through social media.
- On the other hand, in the case of a public school in Thailand located at a province, it is hard to meet the parents as they work and live in the city, leaving their children to relatives or guardians. They have to meet the parents twice a year, and if missed, they have to make a special appointment. Moreover, if you find a child problematic or concerning, the teacher must visit their home.
- There are also problems arising with parents leaving the child to relatives or guardian: sexual harassment, rebellion, neglected child, etc.
- In Cambodia, there is a policy for parent engagement; the problem is its implementation in schools. Same situation in Thailand, parents often leave their children at home to work in the city.
- In some schools in Cambodia, the parents are advised that the meeting is required for the students to continue studying in the school in the next year.
- They are also thinking of using online messaging apps such as Facebook Messenger to easily contact parents.
- It should be instilled on the parents and the community that the development of the children is also their responsibility; everyone must pay attention to education.

- Sometimes they do not meet in the school, but in the pagodas.
- Meanwhile in the Philippines, most of the schools do not have these concrete programs for parents. In most schools, if the students are absent from school for five consecutive days, the teachers will have to visit their homes.
- Another intervention is through giving incentives to the parents like school supplies—straight from the teachers' pockets.
- Sustainability is also an issue in terms of continuously making the children go to school.
- In Indonesia, the local government units have family educational program which has four activities: (1) school visit, (2) home visit, (3) exhibition of students for the parents to watch; and (4) meeting with parents and teachers. Parents sometimes visit the school to talk about their work or interests which helps the students, parents, and teachers to have an idea on their professional careers—parents inspiring parents.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

Explore how the strategies and programs shared by each participant from various countries will be implemented in each other schools.

S4H

Professional Knowledge Needed to Support All Learners

#lifelonglearning

Convener: David Evans

Participants: Salvador Cuare, Pich Hay, Emely Pelobello, Leahgracia Velayo, Lynette Tupas, Krupskaya Anonuevo, Luong Viet Thai, Helen Acop, Laraine dela Torre, Ligaya Bautista, Johari Haji Abas

Documenter: Febbie Ibatuan

Summary of Discussions:

- Inclusive education happens when children with and without disabilities participate and learn together in the same classes. Since teachers are highly involved in this matter, how do we prepare/ train the teachers for this? What are the pre-service programs that teachers should undergo before teaching?
- In Australia, teacher preparation takes 5 years. SPED teachers are required to have a teaching experience in a regular class before taking up special education classes. They also have a very good program in training teachers for inclusive education.
- In the Philippines, CHED already made undergraduate programs

(general education with subjects solely devoted to inclusive education) but are not yet implemented.

- Teachers should be trained to:
 - Create different learning environments that cater to the needs of the students.
 - Embrace changes and employ different strategies in teaching and learning
 - Have an inclusive mindset and understanding in accommodating children with disabilities
 - Maximize the potentials of technology
 - Address inclusion of all students across all subjects
 - Make the students problem solvers
 - Know how to handle emotion as a teacher

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Change the curriculum to support children with varying abilities
- Give importance in building a good culture for the students and teachers
- Involve the stakeholders in the change
- Schools heads need to make training programs for teachers, parents and stakeholders about inclusive education

S41

Talking About the Excluders

#barriers

Convener: Naas Demyttenaere

Participants: Ephraim Membrere, Evangeline Asuncion, Niraphone Keobounlome, Nooramaliatifah Ahmad, Josephine Bernardino, Ildebrando Caday, Shailini Gestosani, Aileen Ballaran, Roland Diaz, Myint Zaw Oo, Tun Tun Min, Jocelyn Tuguinayo, Madilen Espiritu, Florielyn Antalan, Hannah Mae Aldeza, Hannah Rose Manaligod, Elvira Egay, Dove Estor, Bouavanh Lusa, Nadzida Mohd Nadzim, Jennifer Asing

Documenter: Katherine Torralba

Summary of Discussions:

- How can we make the excluders into includers?
- The problem is not the excluded but the excluders. All students are normal; everyone is what they are. It is the society that is making the difference.
- A possible reason why people do not know how to deal with persons with special needs is that they have not had a chance/opportunity before (e.g., in school)
- “If we separate people, we’ll never be inclusive.”
- Perspectives have to change. Disability is a societal issue.

- Everyone has to be careful with the terminology. Everyone has special needs. The more appropriate term is special needs of the learners instead of learners with special needs.
- There should be a universal design in infrastructure, education, etc. which will benefit everyone. For example, ramps are good for everybody—pregnant women, old people, wheelchair users, etc.
- Inclusive education is not synonymous to Education for All. Inclusive education focuses more on the attitude of the teachers/teaching strategies that includes/does not exclude. SPED system is a very exclusive system because students with special needs are separated from the rest.
- Are there policies that teachers should differentiate their teaching?
- The current reality and focus in inclusive education are numbers (i.e. how many are successful)
- Teachers should not be blamed if students do not perform well. Students also shouldn't be blamed. Blaming does not help anybody.
- DepEd is trying to resolve the problem and is currently tracking the dropouts.
- Inclusive education is not about mainstreaming. Teachers should be able to teach different kinds of students. However, there is no such thing as full inclusion. Full inclusion is an ideal state but people work on the ideal.
- In Brunei Darussalam, children with special needs are within the regular classrooms but some of the parents are not able to fully understand this.
- Parents are part of the society that is exclusive/non-inclusive, primarily because during the formative years, they did not have the chance to understand persons with special needs.
- During seminars, there are always discussions on the victims. People should shift from these and look at the victimizers and begin to change how they think about the special needs of learners.
- A blind participant shared that excluders/non-intentional excluders are not aware how to address the special needs of learners. In UP, there are no readily available materials for blind students. So, she relayed to the school how the school can help provide the materials/resources she needed.
- The special needs of the learners vary. These learners have different learning styles, abilities, etc.
- One participant shared that the discussion was an eye opener for her. She said that she could be an excluder (and this could have been because of compliance to policies)
- Systems are making exclusion more pronounced and are widening the divide.
- No teacher excludes but they don't "include." Teachers have the potential to include the students.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Train teachers on inclusivity. Pre-service training should include how teachers should handle the special needs of learners in the primary and secondary levels.
- Orient the politicians since they have the authority and power to create policies and programs that would gradually eliminate an “exclusive/non-inclusive” mindset
- Everyone in society should be considered on equal footing for systems to work
- Change the preconception that there are people who do not have competencies or do not have the ability to learn. These presumptions are building the barriers for them to learn.
- There should be policies, seminars, etc., for excluders to help them understand better.
- The Philippine’s Accessibility Law should be adapted based on the context of the place.
- Empower everyone because everybody can learn.

S4J

Employment Ready for Everyone After Education

#employment

Convener: Elisa Suarez

Participants: Giselle Montero, Rodehlia Macaspac, Josephine Obligar, Edgard Domingo, Nitin Madhav Paranjape, Ma. Jeanette Naval, Cristie Belmonte, Aga Liñan, Gemma Matabang, Sonali Kailas Tongare

Documenter: Emmy Yanga-Domingo

Summary of Discussions:

Employment opportunities for people with special needs

- With 7.5 M unemployed Filipinos in the country, employment is very competitive, and this situation is worse for people with disabilities.
- A participant from the College of St. Benilde shared an experience in helping deaf people to find work. They teach them how to effectively write resumes, the value of punctuality, and raise deaf awareness among corporations and organizations. The deaf graduates usually go work in hospitality, restaurants, business offices, graphics, school aides, and business processing offices. The graduates

also receive good feedbacks from companies and they stay longer in service.

- Today, the employment rate of deaf Filipinos is at 65%. Though there is still a lot to do, it is important to frame the employment of people with special needs as diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism.

Existing mismatch between education and employment

- Despite the existing training matrix among DepEd, CHED, and TESDA, there is still a mismatch between education and employment. Why do most graduates remain unemployed?
- There is no clear linkage between education and labor market.
- Although there are skills trainings for youths, these are not enough to make them employable. Moreover, students do not have sufficient allowance to sustain education and training.
- Government labor policies advocate for overseas labor, which should not be the case.
- There is a need to analyze data to track students' career after schools;
- Job opportunities are concentrated in metropolitan cities and jobs must be made available in the margins.
- Readiness of students is also an issue. For example in Senior High School, there is a mismatch between the interest of the students and their tracks, and even the faculty members' background with the subjects they are teaching.

- The goal should go beyond employment, but entrepreneurship should also be cultivated; such lessons should start from kindergarten.
- In DepEd, assessment results for transition period would point students to choose entrepreneurship. But after giving trainings, there is no capital for the students to use.
- Asian Development Bank has a program called Jumpstart, which trains soft skills for either internship or work.
- In India, what is the future for Indian children? Most education systems all over the world is for 15 years. At the end of their education, the children gained knowledge and skills, but most often the skills attained are unnecessary. The system should not only produce graduates to work in corporations. The system should also tap their inherent talents.
- It is a fact that less than 10% of the students continue to college; the issue is how to support the 90% attending college—ALS must be strengthened;
- This will remain a big challenge for the global south because of the economic gaps.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- There should be a rethinking or re-framing of the purpose of education;
- The purpose of education should go beyond employability or entrepreneurship, it should aim to make the world a better place and should aspire for creativity;

- There must be initiatives from our own organizations. Educators must be trained on creativity;
- There should be more microfinance groups such as Gramin, GoNegosyo to support small scale entrepreneurs;
- In the next five years, artificial intelligence will rule the world; hence, the employment scenario will change. Education should be able to respond to these changes;
- Entrepreneurship and creativity are already embedded in the present K to 12 curriculum; hence, K to 12 curriculum should be strengthened;
- There should be better awareness on the needs of the local community so learners focus on training on courses that will help their communities, e.g., agricultural courses for an agricultural community;
- The purpose of education is not just to jumpstart inclusive education, but the greater purpose of education is to build an inclusive society and world.

S4K

Bringing Schools to Marginalized Learners Through Alternative Delivery Modes

#alternativelearning

Convener: Angelika Jabines

Participants: Victor Fedirigan, Hiyas Clamor-Torneo, Nor Asurah Haji Meluddin, Joan Belga, Mikako Ono, Michelle Dulay, Rosella Torrecampo, Irene Barzaga, Theresa Jane Mendoza

Documenter: Elaissa Mendoza

Summary of Discussions:

- The Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) has been offering different alternative delivery modalities (ADMs) since 2010. ADMs are modalities implemented within the formal system and are offered only to students who are formally enrolled in schools. This is distinguished from Alternative Learning Systems (ALS) which is operated within the non-formal and informal systems.
- The ADMs being offered by the DepEd are:
 - Modified In-School Off-School Approach (MISOSA)
 - Instructional Management by Parents, Community and

Teachers (IMPACT) – First developed by SEAMEO INNOTECH, this modality has been endorsed by DepEd for wider adoption.

- Home Schooling – It used to be implemented only in private schools; it will now be introduced in public schools. Homeschooled students can bring home the modules and learn with their parents.
- Night School – This is for high school learners who are working.
- Open High School Program (OHSP) – High school learners are given printed modules to study and answer at home at their own pace and capabilities.
- Rural farm school – The newest addition to the alternative modalities adopted by DepEd. It focuses on agri-fisheries, and takes an in-school, off-school approach as well. During off-school, students may be asked to observe a community and come up with a proposal on how to improve the community.
- The Kariton Klasrum program of Efren Peñaflorida is a bridge program that has now been adopted by DepEd to entice children to go back to school.
- ADMs are most appropriate for students who:
 - suddenly become sick at any point during the school year.
 - migrate to another place
 - are needed to work during harvest time

- are affected by natural disasters
- are pregnant
- are working (e.g., as helpers) etc.

- **On the student's level of socio-economic status as a precondition for acceptance to an ADM.** Low SES level is not a precondition. As long as the student needs to enlist in an ADM, s/he can do so.
- **On why there is a variety of modalities.** Since students have different circumstances and needs, DepEd envisions a one-stop shop where schools can offer students a variety of learning modalities that would suit them best.
- **On ADMs being offered online.** There used to be a distance education program which offered classes online, but it did not take off as DepEd had issues with their ICT program. Some OHSPs, however, are offering aspects of their program online.
- **On the OHSP modules.** Modules are currently being aligned with the new K to 12 curriculum.
- **On the possibility of private schools adopting an ADM.** The school can write to the Regional Division office about their request. Once approved, schools may have to amend their policies or SEC registration.

Some NGOs and private sector groups have developed their own alternative modality programs (e.g., SMART's distance learning program).

- **On success rates of ADM graduates.** There are many who went on to enrol in college or tech-voc. Another indicator is that the

completion rate of public school students are increasing through the years. Evaluation studies have been conducted which saw the effectiveness of some modalities (e.g., UNICEF's study on IMPACT and MISOSA; SEAMEO INNOTECH's study on OHSP)

- **On how ADMs can become more effective in bringing education to the marginalized learners.** Develop strong policies in ADMs such as the upcoming policy on Flexible Learning Options (FLOs) to be released soon by DepEd. The FLOs policy will cover a menu of ADMs and ALS options that can be implemented by the schools. The DepEd memorandum will be signed as soon as the ALS for Senior High School has been finalized. DepEd has already crafted the implementing guidelines for each ADM.
- **On the possibility of enrolling in two modalities.** This is possible, but would depend on the assessment of the teacher. This should be indicated in the student's learning contract.
- **On the suitability and adaptability of the modules/curriculum to the learners' needs.** For the curriculum and modules to be truly inclusive and responsive to learners' needs, these must be contextualized according to the learners' needs and situation (e.g., for students in disaster areas, curriculum should include concepts on disaster risk reduction). Teachers' ability to do so needs to be strengthened.
- **On ADMs in EiE.** The OHSP, MISOSA and IMPACT are some of the modalities that can be used during emergency situations. The Kariton

Klasrum was also implemented in the Yolanda-hit areas. DepEd is also planning to develop materials that would allow learners who experience suspension of classes in the aftermath of disasters, to study these materials at home or at the evacuation centers in order for learning to still continue.

SEAMEO INNOTECH is also currently developing a toolkit on ADMs in EiE.

In Japan, the government established temporary schools and sent teachers from other provinces to teach the students in the tsunami-affected areas. However, they realized that the students needed to have psychosocial support first before learning can resume. The psychologists' role as initial support is therefore critical in disaster situations.

- **On learners who are not able to answer and complete the modules.** Parents need to inform the parents about this. Teachers on the other hand could offer a more suitable intervention for the child.
 - **On ADM learners' feeling of inclusion.** Some schools with OHSP have policies that allow their ADM students to feel included or integrated (e.g., same uniform as regular students; can join extracurricular activities)
- A participant in Brunei shared that pregnant students in their country are not allowed to attend regular schools because they might serve as a "bad influence" to others.
- **On the training of parents and tutors.** It is recognized that the parents and the community have an important role as learning facilitators, and

therefore, need to undergo training as well. Parents may attend the Learning Action Cells (LAC) sessions of teachers as part of their training.

- In the new DepEd FLOs policy, schools are given more freedom to create and institute their own ADMs based on their need and capability.
- The DepEd is also going to implement a twinning program where schools divisions are partnered with another who can assist them during times of need.
- The quality of ADM and ALS graduates should be sufficient for tertiary schools to be able to accept them.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- The DepEd noted that the following plans and suggestions will be considered:
 - Partnering with local government units (LGUs) in establishing community-based tutorial centers in order to help parents who cannot afford to hire tutors, and to eventually decrease the dropout rate among students
 - Developing appropriate materials for ADM students who have physical impairments. The ADM modules are still not suited for those who have physical impairments (i.e., blind). While there is a SPED program that they can access, it was noted that there may be children with disabilities who are called to work or be put in a condition that

requires the implementation of an ADM. DepEd will be looking into addressing this problem.

- Since radios are still popular to many Filipinos, and are easily accessed during disaster situations, it would be good to consider this as an alternative modality in the future.
- All who are interested to understand more about these modalities are invited to attend DepEd's future conferences and events.

S4N

Revolutionizing the Education System for Inclusion

#educationsystem

Convener: Jose Tuguinayo Jr.

Participants: Jowil Plecerda, Jovelyn Petra Balantin, Jesusa Yadao, Minguela Ting, Cherlie Tiamson, Anunciacion Pagdilao, Elsa Tabudlong, Kyaw Lwin, Catalina Cordeta, Wenefredo Rubio, Liza Libertine Magana, Kimberly Macadangdang, Eloisa Garsi, Chandler Ibabao

Documenter: Gianna Emilyn Earnshaw

Summary of Discussions:

- How can we revolutionize the education system in the Philippines?
- It was emphasized that existing policies in the institutions should be inclusive. There are a lot of existing

policies in place, but these policies are contrary to the principles of inclusion.

- One of the issues in the education system is the implementation of the policies. Everyone must revisit and rethink of ways on how to properly implement inclusive education in the education system.
- The convenor pointed out the following factors that should be revisited to revolutionize the education system: (1) policies, (2) training of teachers and other personnel, (3) learning environment, (4) curriculum, instruction and assessment, and (5) learners.
- Every school should have a child-friendly system that determines its accessibility.
- Teachers should consider the learners in improving the curriculum and instruction.
- The DepEd and other institutions should create networks and partnerships with various organizations and external stakeholders
- Utilize existing technology in delivering the curriculum
- The human behavior and culture are also issues that should be recognized
- Development of the right attitude should start in their own families
- Teachers were considered as the most influential individuals in learning
- Prioritize the human resources to revolutionize the education system

- Curriculum and instruction are the heart of education
- All educational institutions have projects and programs that are aligned with their vision and mission. Given this, there is a misalignment of each institution to achieve a common goal.
- All programs should have accreditations and inclusion programs
- There are proposed bills already about inclusive education
- Teachers should be trained using pedagogical approaches that are inclusive; teachers must not only concentrate on content but also in the delivery of the lessons according to the needs of the learners.
- It is necessary to contextualize and differentiate the assessments.
- Curriculum, instruction and assessment are inseparable.
- Inclusive education is giving options to have a choice and decision to improve the lives of learners
- Revisit and rethink of ways on how to allocate budget for small schools
- Revisit the whole education system on how to do things for both teaching and non-teaching personnel
- Think of ways on how to innovate for a better education system to ensure that inclusive education can be revolutionized

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- There should be a law on inclusive education

- Orient the parents, community, and the external stakeholders for our learners
- Revisit and monitor the SIPs, AAP, AIPs etc. quarterly to make necessary adjustments
- Maximize the use of technology like ISO accreditations
- Improve and practice proper monitoring system for our education system
- Provide teachers with technical assistance
- Improve the hiring process of teachers by properly identifying their technical and behavioral competency
- Enhancement of curriculum, instruction and assessment
- Revisit the per capita of learners and improve the schools' MOOE
- Improve the procurement process
- Teachers should champion inclusive education
- Suggested to have separate policy on inclusive education
- Start a two-way process by training the teachers on inclusion in basic education and higher education so these teachers have the right mindset

S5A

Changing the Negative Perception of Regular Classroom Teachers on Inclusive Education

#inclusiveteachers

Convener: Regine Lapidez

Participants: Janette Lacson, Hyacinth Annjoy Legaspi, Kamonthep Chungchoo, Hanh Doan Thi Thuy, Quynh Doan Thi Hai, Chhayyuth Chhorn, Ma. Katrina Libron, Zenaida Domingo, Michelle Dulay, Edgard Domingo, Ignaas Demyttenaere, Teresita Inciong

Documenter: Lovie Moneva

Summary of Discussions:

- A participant, who is one of the SPED pioneer in the Philippines, gave a brief history of inclusive education in the Philippines.
 - 1952 – There was a scholarship to train public school teachers on special education. This was started by private individuals.
 - The problem: Human Resource Development. There were no orientation or the regular teachers. It was inclusive, but they do not perform according to standards.

- Teacher were called “handicap teacher”
 - Teachers were labeled as “mentally retarded” teacher or “deaf” teacher.
 - Children were called “abnormal” children in the past.
 - In 1994, the Salamanca Statement was signed to move Inclusive Education forward. Dr. Inciong was one of the signatories.
 - The principle of inclusive education: Intended to the diverse learners, not just children with disability, but also to any child who experienced humiliation and indignity.
 - DepEd advocates for inclusive education. They started decentralization, trained and immersed teachers.
 - The convener joined the training for Kindergarten, specific to children with disabilities. She recognized the big challenge of inclusive education, being it far from what they were practicing. They hope that teaching SPED would be less daunting for regular teachers. Love and concern for teachers and students are very important. They need to make sure that the children will learn.
 - Obstacle: Most teachers do not know the reason why they are teaching. If teachers are really dedicated to teach, they would do whatever it takes to help the children learn. Teachers need to believe in what they have to do. It is difficult to motivate teachers if they do not want to teach anymore. If you love what you do, you will be able to practice better.
- In Thailand, children with special needs are in the regular classes. One important thing is that regular teachers should be understanding of the students. Schools could not identify children who have special needs when they are admitted. They learn about the condition of the children when they are already in school. The teachers must accept the reality that there maybe children with special needs in their class.
 - Teachers can advise the parents to make the child see a doctor.
 - There can be someone assisting the child in class as the regular teacher may not be able to handle the child.
 - Parents are sometimes asked to assist as they are the best persons who can understand their children.
 - Where does the negative perception come from?
 - Public schools become a dumping site of children with special needs.
 - Teachers do not know how to deal with children with special needs. Thus, the teachers need guidance and counseling in order to understand the children.
 - Part of giving support to children with special needs is preparing the environment for them. UNESCO has a copy of guidelines on how to do this.
 - Most of the time, parents and teachers are blamed when they could not handle the children, but they are not trained on how to do this as well. SPED teachers are being

trained continuously, but the regular teachers – the ones who should be trained -- are being excluded.

- In Australia and New Zealand, they don't label teachers "regular" or "SPED" anymore. They assume that any teacher would be able to teach any learner.
- Master teachers should mentor teachers. LAC could be used as a venue.
- There is inequity in the salary; SPED teachers have higher salary compared to regular teachers. This is one of the reasons why teachers perceive inclusion as difficult. There are a lot of plantilla, but nobody applies for the position.
- When regular teachers are trained to handle children with special needs, they are assigned with SPED programs.
 - There is a need to change the mindset of teachers--that there are no regular and SPED teachers. Any teacher can teach a blind child, as long as they learned how.
 - The way children are clustered according to their disability is quite problematic. Each child is unique. They should be taught according to their needs, not to their disabilities.
- When "Education for All" was a buzz word, "Teacher for All" was also coined.
- Inclusive education is not just about access and equity, it should also be about quality education for all learners.
- In the past, there was no "special" children. All children in class have the right to learn.
 - "Special needs of all learners" rather than "special children".
- In Cambodia, teachers are motivated to teach because it was mainstreamed. Incentives are given to motivate teachers. However, children with special needs are still grouped together.
 - Incentives should be given to the regular teachers who admit children with special needs. The resources will be used to support to children who need it.
 - Regular teachers should be supported in handling all learners.
- Principals and school heads should also be trained. Bring them to universities to receive training. This also gives unit-credits to them.
- In Vietnam, children's progress are assessed. Even with little progress, they can feel that there is development.
- A framework from Australia was once promoted to be used in the Philippines, however, it was not viable for the Philippines.
- There was resistance initially about inclusive education in all parts of the world.
 - The bottle neck is the parents. The parents should be the ones to advocate for their children.
- Ultimately, the goal of inclusive education is for learners to be part of the mainstream.

- “Inclusion in education”, is not inclusive education. Children with special needs may be included in the classroom, however, they are still not included in the teaching. That is different.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- How do we change the negative perception of teachers?
 - All prejudices that is attached to disability is attached to inclusive education.
 - PWDs want to make inclusive education inclusive to PWDs.
- The teachers supporting children with disability in the regular classroom could be provided incentives.
- Support professional development of all teachers by training them on inclusive education, understanding and being aware of its importance.
- Teacher training should be examined as human resource development is important.
- Regular teachers should be supported with resources and training in handling all learners.
- The principals should also be trained. The leader of the schools should champion this initiative. If the school leader is not committed, it will not happen.
- Inclusion should start from kindergarten in school, or even as young as 0 to 4 in child centers. At that young age, children can learn that the world is full of diverse people.

- Children should be included not only in schools, but also in the community.
 - Inclusion should start from the leadership in the school and the community.

S5B

Ensuring Inclusive Education in a Relocation Community

#poverty

Convener: Dennis Booth

Participants: Franco Teves, Mendato Marcaban, Heracleo Lagrada, Rodehlia Macaspac

Documenter: Jessie Yamson

Summary of Discussions:

- The group discussed how inclusive education can be ensured in a relocation community constituted by displaced urban poor or displaced by war and calamities.
- The problem is, once the community becomes a resettlement area, crime rate, health problems, and unemployment increases.
- In the relocation area for the urban poor:
 - Education of children, young adults, and adults is handled by DepEd and LGU

- LGUs utilize special education fund
- However, infrastructure cannot accommodate everybody
- In the relocation area for the war displaced:
 - Schools accepts elementary and secondary schools' learners
 - However, only those with good academic records are accepted in college
 - Some LGU/school set precondition when relocation is a security issue
- In-city relocation displaced by calamity:
 - People are forced to be concentrated in one community, however, some returned to their previous community as they cannot adapt to the new environment
 - Added class shifts as infrastructure is not enough to accommodate everybody

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Three things to consider:
 - Awareness of the situation (bridging program before immersing them to regular program, i.e., psychosocial program)
 - Acceptance by student and community
 - Accommodation

- Requirements for the successful adaptation of displaced people in the school:
 - Manpower - trained pool of teachers for bridging program and inclusive education
 - Infrastructures, i.e., modular type of classroom
 - Financial resources and logistical support from the government (national and local government)

S5C

Mindfulness and Inclusiveness

#inclusivepractices

Convener: Krupskaya Anonuevo

Participants: Joseph Ryan Lansangan, Jocelyn Tuguinayo, Dove Estor, Arthur Perez, Sherlyn Acosta, Danilo Ungang, Celedonio Danda, Marvin Alde, Annalyn Aquino, Irene Marie Malabanan, Girlie Villariba, Chhayyuth Chhorn

Documenter: Aury Atienza-Santos

Summary of Discussions:

- The group did a breathing exercise first before starting with the session. The convener also shared an essential oil that the participants rubbed between their palms to release the scent and awaken their senses.
- Everyone introduced themselves and explained the reason they chose to attend the session. Some of them

expressed interest in learning what mindfulness is all about; while the others said they have been doing some form of mindfulness exercises.

- The convenor explained that one of her goals is to include mindfulness in the schools. She shared that she had already done initial activities to promote mindfulness in two schools in the country.
- The purpose of the session is to seek the different views of people on mindfulness. The convenor believes that integrating mindfulness will generate interesting conversations among them.
- It was shared that Bhutan ranks first in the world in terms of happiness index and the reason for this just might be because of the wide practice of mindfulness among their people.
- In Denmark, from elementary to high school, there are no exams and home works. Time is spent in strengthening the bond with the family. Everything that the children do with the family, with the community, is included in their portfolios.
- Mindfulness helps one to be more aware of oneself, one's feelings, and therefore be able to handle better oneself and others.
- "Tunganga" (spaced out) is viewed as a form of mindfulness. One foreigner has remarked on how most Filipinos she has observed would always have that spaced out look in their faces. And when this person tried to copy this, she discovered that it was quite helpful. That person accredits the "tunganga" sense to her recovery from an illness that has afflicted her.
- When a person has the spaced out look, that person is actually sensing everything around them.
- Matched with the sense that the human body is similar to a pineapple, the "tunganga" can actually heightens one's senses and one ends up more aware of what is happening around them.
- However, in the Philippines, looking spaced out has a negative impression, particularly if one does this in the school. A student can be reprimanded by a teacher for adopting a "tunganga" look.
- Discovered that people who are "nakatunganga" are more mindful
- Mindfulness is "sensing everything that is happening, growing in it, and integrating it in your consciousness then raising it to the level of awareness so that you can start processing it." Mindfulness can be very relaxing and at the same time, can be electrifying. One needs to be present in the moment to practice mindfulness. The thoughts should not wander.
- The expression of mindfulness can also differ from one culture to another. With Thais, you cannot just touch them. In Japan, it can be done through bowing.
- One of the participants who has long studied and practiced mindfulness for many years, shared her experience with the group and also introduced some mindfulness exercises.
 - She demonstrated the "mindful handshake" using the thumb and the index finger.

- She also demonstrated a mindful exercise that will recharge the spinal column. She started with one member of the group and then they each tried to apply it to other members of the group.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Mindfulness is physical and spiritual at the same time. When you are mindful, you give so much energy.
- You can decide what you want to do with your energy. For the practitioner in the group, after studying mindfulness for 5 years, she decided that she will only use it to energize people and wake up their senses.
- Another tip to relax: For 5-10 minutes, don't think of any conflicts. Remember happy times. Focus on breathing. Afterwards, drink lukewarm water with a bit of salt.
- After a long day, just to shake off the energies absorbed from different sources, just do the act of rubbing your hands down the length of your arms and shake off the excess energies absorbed.
- Reminder: Don't bring home the problem of your workplace. It can be solved the next day when you return to work.

S5D

Developing Firm Follow-Up Mechanism for ALS Completers

#alternativelearning

Convener: Rogin Christ Eribal

Participants: Irene Barzaga, Victor Fedirigan, Hiyas Clamor-Torneo, Ligaya Bautista, Aldila Filomenita Bajuyo, Nonie Ahaddas

Documenter: Jelico Arriesgado

Summary of Discussions:

- Scope: Elementary and Junior HS Alternative Learning System (ALS) Completers
- Irene Barzaga shared her experience as a former mobile teacher inside the Quezon City Jail.
 - Inmates take the program to reduce sentence or number of years that they need to serve
 - Success of the program depends heavily with the support of the prison warden and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP).
 - The Local Government Unit's (LGU) support to inmates was secured at the time that they were allowed to vote, thereby giving prisoners the supplies they need inside the classroom

- The same modules by the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) Alternative Learning Systems were used and implemented inside the prison
- The main challenge for her is the After-Care Program or Follow-through upon the release of the inmate
- The key to a successful follow-through is to concretize partnerships and collaboration with focal government agencies and private sectors (i.e. stakeholders) to provide programs like livelihood trainings and seminars, counselling and coaching activities

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Develop and make use of the DepEd community mapping and/or tracking system for passers and learners (e.g. Out of School Youth/OSYs), and determine whether they are gainfully employed or not. Currently, DepEd already have the data but needs to harness and analyze it further for next actions and steps, like policy formulation/modifications
- Explore possibility of having ALS for the Philippine Senior High School programs and train teachers and prepare facilities and resources for such
- Ensure that ALS completers will undergo a bridging program before entering a university.
- Provide Coaching and Career Guidance for ALS Completers as soon as they complete the program and before taking the A&E examination
- Review existing agreements (e.g. MOA) with various agencies and organizations on ALS and determine if provision and agreements are still applicable. This review requires involving ALS learners and stakeholders
- Maximize the use of Social Media by establishing Facebook chat group to track completers
- Expand Support Systems for the ALS Completers like the Resource Center for Youth Development
- Make use of current researches and data about OSYs and ALS Learners. Currently, some baseline data can be obtained from interest groups like the Ateneo De Zamboanga
- Ensure constant and effective communication line with DepEd (e.g. DepEd Action Center, FOI) and other focal government agencies.

S5E

Managing Learning Opportunities of LGBT in Inclusive Education

#genderequality

Convener: Eleanor Sarabillo

Participants: Robert Rebamontan, Aurelio Alvarez, Ronald Celino, Phakamas Singjai, Porntip Uppatum, Hannah Mae Aldeza, Hannah Rose Manaligod, Gerry Rojo, Roland Diaz, Leahgracia Velayo

Documenter: Euni Bagalihog

Summary of Discussions:

- LGBT people are very influential, productive, and creative; however, the LGBT experiences bullying because there is no guidelines and school regulations protecting their rights.
- Some issues that LGBT encounter are strict uniform and hair style policies and the use of toilets (e.g., gays are not allowed to use the toilet for females but they are likely to get bullied if they use the toilet for males)
- Why not consider gender-neutral uniforms? On the other hand, uniform is just a uniform; it is not meant to repress identity.
- They can be allowed to express themselves, but they should still follow the rules and should be guided

on the values and attitudes; they should not go over the limitations, maintaining a dignified personality.

- There should be school activities where LGBT can express themselves. Include gender development in the action planning for upcoming school activities.
- Support groups should be available to LGBT students. If they have concerns, they should have a representative they can comfortably talk to, who can also speak to the school administration about their concerns.
- Social acceptance is important which should start from the family. Parents shaped the attitudes of children. Communities and teachers should be oriented about LGBT—there should be a sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) briefing.
- People tend to be afraid of things they do not understand.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Gender orientation for families
- Include gender development in the action planning in schools and government
- Strengthen policies that would protect LGBT

S5F

Barriers to the Implementation of Inclusive Education

#barriers

Convener: Lito Adanza

Participants: Rex Bernardo, Erwin Felipe, Giselle Montero

Documenter: Benedict Santos

Summary of Discussions:

- Teachers who do not speak the mother tongue of their students
- Difficulties faced by differently abled students
- In SPED public schools, students with special needs are lumped together regardless of their specific conditions to fulfill class size requirement for funding
- Teachers don't exhibit commitment to students with special needs; some even complain about having to take in differently abled students
- Lack of financial support from local government units is a major barrier, as well as the misuse of funds allocated for education
- There might be a problem with the idea that students with special needs should automatically be enrolled in SPED schools
- In inclusive education, students with special needs should be enrolled in mainstream schools first before opting for SPED schools
- Behavior management strategies used on students in schools
- Lack of equipment and materials in schools. School staff usually make up for the lack of learning resources by maximizing their network
- Small representation of the PWD sector in policy-making bodies in government units is also a major barrier

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Teachers should be equipped with knowledge on inclusive education and skills in managing students with special needs
- New teachers may be more receptive to the principles of inclusive education
- Address problems in training, resources, and policy which hamper the full implementation of inclusive education

S5G

Transition Program into Workforce in Inclusive Education

#employment

Convener: Maritess Romen

Documenter: Robert Daulat

Summary of Discussions:

- Capitalize on students' strengths, framed against their conditions. Focus on interdisciplinary assessment is important to determine abilities and strengths to capitalize. Boosting morale through basic vocations, marketing products or services by SPED students.
- In the Philippines, there is no formal transition program into the workforce. Most efforts are through school-based efforts. Planning of transition is important for various facets of students' development (social, academic, physical).
- In Cambodia, there are 3 to 5-year programs enhancing their basic skills for employment. Some programs transition students to either national or private employment. At school level, children are taught life skills (cooking, baking, crafts, etc.). The program is for all students, there is no separation of students. Flexibility is considered in terms of geography and student context. Areas with minority dialects and languages

have accommodation for such, but majority is conducted in Khmer— Education for All initiative.

- Discuss policy towards transitions and inclusivity research target of government. Interdisciplinary teams may be helpful, if only there is network building for easier transitions.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Key factor is the collaboration with stakeholders. Vocational programs help with transition of SPED students to work opportunities. There are private corporations and entities willing to partner with public/private schools for transitioning SPED students into the workforce. NGOs also initiate programs for SPED students with particular conditions to be employed (e.g. job fairs, employment linkages). LGU partnership is also important for wider implementation. Open line of communication and reaching out to stakeholders are the key to achieving partnerships. Collaboration between students-parents-school-stakeholders is priority, emphasizing shared responsibility for the betterment of the students' education.

S5H

Starting and Sustaining Lifelong Learning of Educators and Students

#lifelonglearning

Convener: Romina Bautista

Participants: Theresa Jane Mendoza, Rene Lopus, Nooramaliatifah Ahmad, Johari Haji Abas

Documenter: Jocelyn Ilanan

Summary of Discussions:

- Higher education institutions should cover and foster the continuous development of metacognition, Filipino values, executive functioning, and other practices of inclusive education.
- The development of executive functioning includes planning, organizing, memory, reflection, etc.
- Metacognition is thinking about thinking—its knowledge/awareness and application/regulation.
- Lifelong learning may be defined as: non-stop learning, formal and/or informal, reflective learning, learning from workplace and outside of workplace, openness, attitude and persistence, open to change, learning that never stops, continuous process that needs to be cultivated, continuity in learning, learning with people, values and attitudes, experiential learning
- Learning should start at home, but may be affected by many factors such as absence of parents, relationship with siblings, family dynamics, etc.
- Parents are models of their children; the parenting style is a factor on how young people learn.
- In Balanga, the local government unit sees the need to strengthen the family by undergoing different seminars such as how to inculcate values in their children, financing, etc.; they found out that their honor students are children of parents who have undergone such seminars.
- In Japan, children learn the good values first before the academics.
- Teaching values such as respect, obedience and honesty is very important.
- Dishonesty may be a major factor in disqualifying a student from scholarship.
- To be a successful learner, one has to have a quiet ego (humility in learning), hyper-learning, managing self, reflective listening (“digestive listening”) and mindful of others.
- Self-awareness is also important in lifelong learning.
- There is great divide in what you know and what you do; what is learned in school is different from what is being practiced outside of school; attitude in school is opposite outside of school

- There are also some teachers who misbehaved (acting less educated)
- Digital media has greatly influenced students' attitude
- Learn, unlearn and re-learn; now is the time to let go and change
- Mentioned cycle of change—denial, acceptance and in-between; everyone must be mindful of change.
- Posed the question, “Would it be easier for young people today to be lifelong learners than us?”
- Young people today have a lot of and easier access to information than young people before, but the processing of information is very different
- It is hard to teach/inculcate values in young people if the nation leaders are misbehaving or do not have the right attitude/values
- Congruency and humility are very important in learning
- In conclusion, lifelong learning is our responsibility because we are responsible for ourselves and the people we are affecting

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Both parents/family and teachers/staff should be mindful of and maximize incidental teaching and learning
- There must be congruency inside and outside of the classroom
- Focus on inculcating values from the home to the school
- We must develop a healthy environment for students to learn

S51

Write It Simple

#inclusivepractices

Convener: Rem Tanauan

Participants: Owen Peña, Marielle Ferrer, Laraine dela Torre, Thea Soriano, Edicio dela Torre, Joelyn Soldevilla-Biag, Rosella Torrecampo, Nitin Madhav Paranjape, Kathryn Abaño, Maria Ana Liza Serrana, Sharon Chao, Lynette Tupas, Cristie Belmonte, Philip Purnell, Manssour Mussallam, Maria Veronica Perez, Marielle Ferrer, Monica Ann Poliquit

Documenter: Nicole Asedillo

Summary of Discussions:

- For context, the convenor worked in a SEAMEO INNOTECH project in doing dejargonization—making academic-sounding text more understandable and appreciable. It is the basis of this sessions, as being inclusive, especially in writing, is not just about the learners, students, but for educators as well.
- The session is divided into three parts:
 - **What:** The session is about tips, tools and techniques in inclusive writing. Inclusive writing is making technical and highly jargonized language more understandable to general readers.
 - **Why:** Simplicity, according to the ancient Chinese, is a principle of power. Making things simple,

particularly in language and communication is a crucial approach to get one's message across much easier.

- **How:** Brief exercises on three ways of thinking in inclusive writing, plus helping participants to use the Four Pillars of Balanced and Inclusive Education as an example in rendering them into simple terms.
- There are three ways of thinking (how):
 - **Think like a poet.** Poets are known to convey experience through words, primarily because of their capacity to create powerful metaphors. In this thinking, the idea is to feel how the words feel, and imagine what the words look like. This breaks one's common or trite definition of words, and instead expand one's perception and relationship with them. (Exercise: Participants were asked to choose a set of words they are using every day in their work, and describe them as a feeling or image through metaphors that they themselves personally experience.)
 - **Think like a copywriter.** Copywriters are known to render a persuasive message in only just a few words. Most of these examples are slogans, advocacy or advertising campaigns, jingles, and taglines that we encounter in many advertising platforms. In this thinking, the idea is to cut all the unnecessary words, and simplify by writing them in a short phrase. (Exercise:

Participants were asked to write only in 6 words the descriptions they wrote about their chosen words.)

- **Think like a translator.** Translators are known to turn a text from one language to another, to help readers appreciate in their native language the text written in a foreign one. In this thinking, the idea is to "translate" a complex idea into a simple one, so to deepen appreciation of that idea. (Exercise: Participants were asked to simplify their 6-word examples by turning Latin-originated words into their English counterparts, achieving simplicity without sacrificing meaning.)
- Using Four Pillars of Balanced and Inclusive Education as an example, inclusive writing will:
 - help educators define in just a few simple words what each Pillar exactly mean
 - appreciate the Pillars' deeper and more complex meanings by starting with simpler taglines.
 - easily adapt the Pillars in their specific approaches, methodologies, and missions as inclusive educators.
- Below is the output of the participants in the exercise:

Four Pillars of Balanced and Inclusive Education
➤ Everyone is moving to grow
Intraculturalism
➤ Coming and growing from each other

Transdisciplinarity
➤ Linking the way we think
Dialecticism
➤ Thinking through together
Contextuality
➤ Valuing the learners' reality

- Note: The output is not meant to replace the Pillars, which, by themselves, are essentially powerful words. The emphasis is only on the aims mentioned above, so as to enrich the Pillars' power to educators who share the same vision.

S5L

Making Inclusive Education Real in the Field

#inclusivepractices

#diverseneeds

Convener: Catalina Cordeta

Participants: Pich Hay, Madilen Espiritu, Salvador Cuare, Irene Marie Malabanan, Gemma Matabang, Marisol Mendelivar, Dean Ric Endriano, Nimfa Maca, Josephine Bernardino, Ma. Jezza Castillo, Tricia Mariza Mercado, Florielyn Antalan, Carissa Ramirez, Sarah Jane dela Rosa, Elsa Tabudlong, Ildebrando Caday, Joan Castillo, Candra Penoliar, Marjoe Floranda, Rolando Juanillo, Jesusa Yadao, Jowil Plecerda, Melissa Borela, Anunciacion Pagdilao, Jackie Lou Tayaban, Helen Acop

Documenter: Genesis Montero

Summary of Discussions:

- Questions for the reader:
 - Are regular teachers ready to accept children with special needs?
 - Are parents open to the condition of their children, are they willing to be helped, are they willing to be of help?
 - Do you have the heart for our amazing kids?
 - If you answered yes to everything, then inclusive education is possible!
- In Biliran, 16 schools have implemented inclusive education; school acceptance for children with diverse needs is increasing.
- They employed inclusion support assistance (ISA) which act as shadow teachers to students with disabilities in the regular classrooms. They are composed of volunteers with education degree specializing in special education and passers of the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). They are granted with an honorarium amount of PHP 100.
- Teachers undergo trainings in sign language and handling children with special needs. There is also quarterly recognition of teachers with exceptional performance.
- Parent education and various involvements to capacitate parents to handle children with special needs at home are also organized.
- The Cabucgayan League of Action Person with Disabilities (CLAPD) is a

support group of the parents of the children and persons with disabilities in the community and in school.

- Aside from the strong local government support, other organizations also help the division in pushing for inclusive education. It was the recipient of Project BEST. Their support is not only limited to financial aid; they also conduct sessions and training on inclusive education.
 - The intervention increased self-esteem and interaction with other children—they found a sense of belongingness. The children felt free from the mislabelling and bullying and had access to equal basic education.
 - The parents had a dramatic change on their perception in sending their children to regular class and found community support.
 - The teachers applied the paradigm shift from segregation to inclusion.
 - The school had increased enrolment of the CWD.
- Conducted training for assessment of children with learning impairment

Questions:

- How do you go about mainstreaming students with special needs?
 - Children are already included in the regular classes and regular curriculum.
- Employment of shadow teachers only when necessary and when situation calls for it.
- There is a resource room for children with extreme needs to prepare them for mainstreaming.
- How much salary do teachers receive when handling classes with special needs?
 - The same with teachers in regular classes; there are no incentives.
- Since we have children with different needs, can we adopt different curriculum for their varying needs?
 - Aside from the DepEd curriculum, IEP is also adopted for CWD depending on their needs
 - A curriculum that fits everybody cannot be designed. What should be done then is to contextualize curriculum. It is necessary to train teachers in this method. The method should be learner-centric with the goal of helping the children to function in the community. Lessons should also be more practical than theoretical.

S5M

Implementing Quality Inclusive Education in a Diverse Learning Community

#diverseneeds

#inclusivecommunity

Convener: Emely Pelobello

Participants: Mikako Ono, Rogen Jahari, Nessa Espina, Jovelyn Balantin, Mylene Ordilla, Adeline Luarez, Leahgracia Velayo, Mylene Bajum, Francisca Tiburcio, Shella Navarro, Divina Mateo, Carmencita Pintor, Jennifer Joson, Lanie Socorro, Rosalie De Guzman, Mary Ruth Salonga, Gemma Matabang, Jury Yosores, Evangeline Asuncion, Ephraim Membrere

Documenter: Mai Dones

Summary of Discussions:

- An example of a model inclusive learning community is the Commonwealth Elementary School. Of its 8,525 students, 250 are learners with special needs, 180 are in the Alternative Learning System, and 156 are in the Madrasah program. Of their 211 teachers, there are 11 SPED teachers.

An Inclusive Classroom

- A receiving teacher and a SPED teacher are assigned to a classroom that has learners with disabilities.

- The school head assigns coordinators for programs that are geared towards inclusive learning, i.e. ALS, SPED, Madrasah.
- Parents of learners with special needs are capacitated and educated through school-initiated programs. There is increased attendance in PTA meetings when parents are provided onboarding sessions on their children's needs.
- K to 12 instructional materials are transcribed into Braille by SPED teachers. However, the SPED teacher who took on this project left for the US in 2017.
- The Philippine government, through DepEd, provides support to schools with significant number of Muslim learners by opening an item or plantilla position for a Madrasah teacher.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

Teacher Empowerment

- A SPED teacher spends three hours of her day assisting receiving teachers in the classroom. The remainder is spent facilitating activities in the SPED Center and engaging learners with special needs through learner-specific interventions.
- SPED teachers are also the ones who design learner-specific competency checklist and assessments for learners with special needs.

Increase Stakeholder Engagement

- A huge learning community afforded the position to attract stakeholders that are willing to provide support in the acquisition of hearing aids, braille books, and facilities for learners with special needs.

S5N

Making the Learning Environment More Inclusive for Learner Diversity

#classroominstruction

Convener: Mae Dumapig

Participants: Liza Libertine Magana, Joan Belga, Yayi Fua, Zulfajri Basri Hasanuddin, Ma. Jeanette Naval, Mary Lonna Buenafe, Rembert Bautista, Jesus Insilada, Nadzida Mohd Nadzim, Jennifer Asing, Adelina Velasco, Miriam Coprado, Ildebrando Caday, Teresita Felipe, Heng Sophann, Johari Haji Abas, Angelika Jabines, Gemma Matabang, Monishah Shah, Nur Masturah Ibrahim, Candra Penoliar

Documenter: Nathaniel Lumbré

Summary of Discussions:

- There are different scenarios in classrooms: diversity, with special needs, different economic status, different religious affiliations, cultures, learning disabilities and behaviors.
- Teachers are not fully aware of these real scenarios inside the classrooms.
- In Malaysia, they give emphasis on including students with disabilities in regular classes. Slow learners are also included in normal class discussions and lessons.
- Even in the level of regular learners, there is still diversity in terms of learning and gaining knowledge. Exclusion is evident even in classes with regular students.
- In the Philippines, DepEd SPED teachers have non-standardized assessments for their way of teaching.
- The current population of SPED teachers is low; thus, resulting to exclusion of a great number of SPED students.
- US standard class population is 30 students; Philippines have an average of 50 students per class.
- Students with mental disabilities can participate in regular classes but it depends on the severity of their cases.
- Safety issues hinder these children with special needs from participating in regular classes.
- Learning environment primarily is the classroom, but entirely it is the whole school.
- DepEd have building standards but not all are following these structure standards.
- In the public school setting, majority of the parents of the students do not want their children in these classes.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Expertise of SPED teachers globally is really needed.
- DepEd now has a multi-factor assessment tool (for Grade 1 students) to determine the strengths and weaknesses of students for them to provide appropriate integrative curriculum. This tool will only be administered to children with diverse needs. It assesses several domains such as cognitive, psychomotor, and emotional.
- Mainstreaming suggests adding two children with special needs in a regular class.
- DepEd is now facilitating a segregation of mild and moderate learners in the basic education. They are also training teachers for Grade 1 and Grade 7.
- Have a regular teacher and a SPED teacher inside a classroom to use team teaching, parallel teaching, and blended learning.
- DepEd creates a policy to control the number of SPED students inside a classroom.
- Water sanitation and hygiene in schools is a serious matter concerning learning environment. Sanitation activities should be facilitated more in public schools. The children must have a clean and safe environment to live on.
- Gender related issues are also a concern in building a learning environment. Bullying is also a serious matter for all genders that needs

to be resolved in all school levels. A peaceful system and relationship creates a conducive learning system.

- Learners with problems in mobility have greater challenges in access to quality education. Physical condition and structures of schools are important.
- Creating a learning environment consists of dealing with the teachers and the physical structure and psycho-social aspect of the school itself.
- Following standards is very important in all systems of the school. Bring all issues to our higher ups on the organization.
- Inclusivity is not just about disabilities.
- Full implementation of the school-based management, a child friendly system.
- The out-of-school youth must have access to alternative learning system.
- Follow the psycho-social requirements of the learners.
- Create a learning environment of respect not only in the classroom. Focus on their abilities rather than on the things they cannot do.

S5P

Project GROWS (Genuine Relationship and Opportunities with Stakeholders)

Intensifying Involvement of
Stakeholders in School Programs,
Activities, and Projects

#inclusivecommunity

Convener: Richard Subia

Participants: Kyaw Lwin, Luong Viet Thai, Jocelyn Barbosa, Elvira Egay, Aileen Ballaran, Andrea Pineda, Rosa Olafsson, Erma Jamon, Juanita Morato, Ildebrando Caday, Johari Haji Abas, Myint Zaw Oo, Tun Tun Min, Ephraim Membrere, Agee Liñan, Gemma Matabang, Candra Penoliar, Eko Lesmono, Ahmad Firdauz bin Abdullah Tahrin, Wiwik Indriyani Hadi Mulyono, Herawati Diah Kusumaningrum, Evangeline Asuncion, Sopheak Chhom, Charles Fatima Guterres, Paulo Dias Menezes, Eloisa Garsi, Kimberly Macadangdang, Chandler Ibabao, Val Amiel Vestil, Bouavanh Lusa, Niraphone Keobounlome

Documenter: Gianna Emilyn Earnshaw

Summary of Discussions:

- Strengthen the involvement of stakeholders in school programs, projects and activities

- The potential stakeholders identified were the parents, LGUs, private entities, and the government
- Schools need to engage with stakeholders because DepEd cannot stand alone due to its limited resources
- Lifelong learning developed during childhood are the main foundation of the community
- There should be a genuine engagement with stakeholders
- Special Education Fund (SEF) can be used for activities in the school both in development, curriculum and instruction
- Non-government organizations like business organizations should support the programs, projects and activities
- Steps that can be done:
 - Identify and convene potential stakeholders through conferences
 - As school head, present the current situation of the school
 - There should always be a deed of donation and acceptance
 - Recognize the efforts of the stakeholders (e.g. plaque of appreciation)
 - Use digital platforms
- Value the networking partnership with stakeholders
- Project GROWS emphasize the genuine relationship to the stakeholders

- In the Philippine setting, Brigada Eskwela is one way to prepare the schools for the next school year
- One of the best practices of engagement with stakeholders is the participation and support of LGUs for appropriate budget
- Social media networks are powerful tools in sharing stories
- In Indonesia, social media networks and other digital platforms were also used to disseminate information
- In the Philippines, parents' financial assistance is voluntary.
- In promoting inclusive education, one major project is to have an internet connection, especially in the remote areas. Support from government and other stakeholder is very important in this project
- One Indonesian shared that in their remote areas, internet connection was sponsored by the alumni, not the government
- In institutionalizing stakeholder partnership and participatory mechanisms in schools, school head should be able to promote its own institution to advocate quality education
- Local government should also provide and augment the needs of the learners in their own localities
- School head should be proactive and create partnerships and linkages in building the community
- A good social responsibility is to have the right mindset to further improve the education system

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- The national government should have a sufficient allocation for mobilization
- Involvement of parents in school programs and activities
- Maintain smooth relationship, connections and engagement for the sake of the children
- "Para sa Bata, Para sa Bayan"
- Whenever there was reshuffling of leaders, one must need to maintain the projects and networking to empower the school leaders
- Transform learners to have a better and quality education
- All partnerships should have deed of donations and acceptance with appropriate goals and timeline

S6A

Obstacles in Inclusion and Ways to Address Them

#barriers

Convener: Dean Ric M. Endriano

Participants: Catalina Cordeta, David Evans, Yayi Fua, Jowil Paecerna, Elba Tabudlong, Giselle Montero, Chhom Sopheak, Plcl Hay, Dkhjh Nooramaliatifah Pg Hj Ahmad, Eko Lesmono, Janette Lacson, Regine Lapidez, Hyacinth Annjoy Legaspi

Documenter: Regina Peñarroyo

Summary of Discussions:

- Inclusive education is a way to build an inclusive society. Inclusive education is not a new concept, but its importance seemed to be forgotten.
 - The first step in any endeavor is preparing a plan and knowing your foe.
 - When asked to think of one obstacle to inclusive education, the participants gave various answers such as attitude of stakeholders, funding and support, policies, etc.
 - Based on the answers generated from the participants, the following categories were identified: (1) negative attitude, (2) untrained teachers, (3) inconsistent policies, (4) poor collaboration, (5) indifferent leaders, (6) rigid curriculum, and (6) physical barriers. These represent the most pressing obstacles/barriers to inclusion.
- Before asking the “how” the “why” should be asked first: Why are there negative attitude towards inclusivity? Why are there untrained teachers?
 - On untrained teachers, some teachers are not qualified to teach children with diverse needs.
 - Teachers should undergo basic training in special education (SPED) such as sign language, dealing with autism, etc.
 - The SPED teachers can also mentor untrained teachers through learning action cells (LACs).
 - Moreover, inclusive education should be added to the course curriculum for teachers.
 - Still, the teachers are not the only one that should be trained—everyone must be reoriented on inclusive education (school administrators, staff, etc.)
 - On negative attitudes, there is a mindset that inclusion is burdensome—it takes additional efforts to prepare for teaching. In addition, the definition of inclusion is stuck at “accepting children with special needs”, and this might cause negative attitude among teachers who are not equipped to handle these.
 - Teachers need to understand that inclusion does not only mean having students with special needs—even in a classroom in which everyone is “able”, teachers should be inclusive. Students

are all different and have diverse learning styles—teachers need differentiated instruction. Gender is also another area where there are so many unconscious biases.

- There is unconscious bias stemming from lack of understanding. There is a need to re-evaluate, rethink, and understand the context. There is a need to be conscious of one's own biases and ask how one can better understand the other.
- Parents, community, institutions, and other stakeholders need to understand inclusive education as well. There is a need to address cases in which parents of regular students have a negative attitude towards special kids mingling with the regular kids.
- Growth Mindset by Carol Dweck is being promoted in Brunei for students, parents, and teachers. This can help in addressing negative attitudes about inclusion.
- On lack of education, some parents lack the education to understand their children's special needs due to socio-economic situations.
- On lack of support from all stakeholders, there is a need to better collaborate and network with everyone who are willing to support inclusion. There is a need to address negative mindsets to gain support from everyone. Awareness is important—if the person is aware and well-informed, then the person will be able to support.
- On poor collaboration, organizations and companies that champion and support advocacies can be tapped. Also, graduates who have disabilities can give back to be an inspiration to all.
- In Brunei Darussalam, as mandated by the Compulsory Education Act, every parent must send their children to school; otherwise, the parents can be jailed or fined. If a child is frequently absent, the teachers will contact the parents and may visit the house. It is emphasized that monitoring is important.
- In Cambodia, it is a challenge to pay attention to all 50-70 students in a class. It is also very difficult to apply differentiated instruction in such large classes; it is not easy to follow curriculum.
 - Teacher meetings are held to share best practices, discuss issues, and help each other.
 - There is low engagement with the parents due to financial constraints—they do not have time to check in with their children because they have to work.

S6B

Managing Schools with Diverse Learners Even Without Special Education Teachers

#specialeducation

Convener: Teresita Inciong

Participants: Katrina Libron, Linaida Dang, Kamonthep Chungchoo, Helen Acop, Jesusa Yadao

Documenter: Febbie Ibatuan

Summary of Discussions:

- The group defined the meaning of diverse learners as children with special needs, children with dysfunctional family, children without parents or with OFW parents, etc.
 - Learners come from diverse backgrounds and even before, teachers in the Philippines are already adept with skills in managing diverse learners in the classrooms. School is regarded as a learning center for all.
 - There are different methods to accommodate diverse learners in the classroom such as differentiated instruction, constructivist's approach, buddy system, the use of multiple intelligences, and peer coaching.
- In Thailand, a participant shared that they do not have special education (SPED) teachers but they have teacher assistants in some classrooms. They work as a team to handle students with different needs.
- What will we do now? What needs to happen next?**
- Modify the curriculum to suit the needs of these students; add other activities aligned with inclusive education.
 - Teachers must profile their students to identify their abilities and disabilities.
 - Teachers can take up courses or postgraduate degrees on handling these students and read materials and resources regarding this topic.
 - Share knowledge/best practices within and outside school (e.g., using assistive devices, varying the classroom grouping, creating a committee on arts or sciences, etc.)
 - Include local school board for training the teachers; encourage all school staff to be involved in the changes that will be implemented.
 - Use this opportunity to conduct a case study research on inclusive education.
 - Build alliances with stakeholders—get support from the local government, tap NGOs that have a project on these learners, educate the parents on inclusive education, and conduct a resource mobilization project.

S6C

Inclusive Education Using Digital Platform

Providing Opportunities for the Disadvantaged, Disengaged, Disabled, and Displaced Groups (4Ds)

#technology

#diverseneeds

Convener: Mikako Ono

Participants: Zulfajri Hasanuddin, Chhorn Chhayyuth, Val Amiel Vestil, Rogin Christ Eribal, Firdauz Abdullah

Documenter: Kat Torralba

Summary of Discussions:

- The topic explores using digital platforms for the education of learners who are not able to attend regular schools.
- Nisai Virtual Academy, a British e-Learning provider based in UK, offers an online course for the displaced, disengaged, disabled and disadvantaged groups. It is like an international school where course completers are given certificates based on UK standards. The content of the courses is localized per country. (www.nisai.com)
- In the virtual academy, there is no judgement, no peer pressure.
- Communication is done through personal and group chats and microphones.
- Accredited teachers are hired by Nisai and teachers handle 5-12 students per class. Each class runs for about 45 minutes.
- The duration of courses depends on the student's condition—it could run from two weeks to two years.
- Each student has a mentor whom they can contact online.
- There is an international community inside the academy where students come from different countries. Aside from academics, students can also post and share personal interests with other students. Nisai is also looking into the well-being of the students (e.g., provision of online sports).
- Nisai completers have become more confident and they are able to go to the mainstream schools.
- Students are taught English and practical skills (i.e., writing emails to employers)
- Authentic interaction is achieved through microphones and interactive whiteboard; and activities outside the classrooms that students need to do.
- Online assignments are also used in the program and can be accomplished by groups (students in one group from different countries)
- Pre and post assessment are utilized. There is no age requirement, but the abilities of the learners are assessed.
- Nisai also provides vocational training (i.e., farming, marketing) depending on the need of the community/ industry

- There is no mobile app yet under the program so the courses are web-based
- Nisai maintains the hub in partnership with the local government so the students do not have to pay anything.
- Not all children with disabilities can join the program such as those with visual and hearing disabilities, among others.
- No video is provided in the program so the quality of audio facilities, delivery, and other resources is maintained
- A main concern for this kind of delivery is the internet connectivity, but Nisai has a live technical support for its students
- Mobile apps can be more accessible to younger children
- Assistive technology is very helpful—technology is important for learning in this time.
- In the future, there might be no formal schools because everything will be online.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Explore higher bandwidths so live sessions (video) could be conducted
- Open an Asian office in Japan for Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, and may open in Malaysia and Australia. Nisai is also working with ADB for areas/students affected by disaster.
- Possible offering of Japanese language in the program

S6D

Using Information Technology in Promoting Equal Access to Inclusive Education Particularly Those with Special Needs

#technology

Conveners: Jocelyn Barbosa, Hannah Mae Aldeza

Documenter: Nathaniel Lumbré

Summary of Discussions:

- The convenor had interest in software development, to help visually impaired students.
- Discussed ecological solutions to address problems dealing with inclusive education.
- Schools do not have enough technological resources; not all secondary level schools have ICT facilities.
- The capability of each university is different in terms of preparing these learners with diverse needs that will join the work force.
- Students with special needs who are mainstreamed in college may have hired interpreters. Unfortunately, the interpreters are not inclined to the course being taken and cannot fully understand technical words;

hence, it is difficult to interpret them correctly. This is a challenge to create an effective learning system for these learners.

- The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) has a critical role in improving the IT infrastructure (e.g., connecting LGUs through networks) to implement the e-learning systems even in remote areas.
- For instance, in partnership with DepEd, there is a Kindle-based reading program which involves 2 hours of instruction per day, on top of their regular class.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Communication is the key—there should be resources available online to promote inclusion.
- Education should be provided not only to persons with disabilities but also to those who live in geographically remote areas—no one should be excluded.
- Inclusive education is accessibility to instructional materials. Nowadays, textbooks are available in Braille and text-to-speech software is implemented in schools.
- We need programmers and experts in information technology (IT) to develop more softwares that will help these persons with disabilities.
- Universities should familiarize themselves with softwares that will help learners with diverse needs. For example, the University Virtual Learning Environment (UVLE) of the University of the Philippines Diliman and its text-to-speech function.
- State universities should look into different learning management systems.
- Universities should look into partnerships and promotions to maintaining a conducive learning environment for the learners with diverse needs. They should consider these learners in their strategic planning.
- Partnerships between the DepEd and the LGUs nationwide should be established: construction of learning hubs and provision of teacher trainings on ICT.
- These solutions should reach far and remote areas nationwide; cater to 4th class to 6th class municipalities.
- Filipinos' talents and skills should be recognized in the Philippines and not in other countries. DOST is selecting scholars that will undergo IV league certifications.
- Use technological solutions to address problems in inclusion—providing different educational media such as pictures and video format.
- Increase receptiveness and willingness of the faculty in taking lessons for the deaf (e.g., train faculties in sign language, etc.) Encourage the teachers and professors to teach their students using UVLE. Address specific concerns to University deans and vice-chancellors.
- There should be provision of research aids to further studies on learners with diverse needs. Fora and conference could also be conducted to exchange ideas between the experts in the area.

S6E

Formulating the Interdisciplinary Strategies and Values to Cater to Inclusive Education

#inclusivepractices

Participants: Dove Estor, Paraluman R. Giron, Romina G. Bautista, Jocelyn Tuguinayo, Rene Lopos, Jose Tuguinayo Jr.

Documenter: Elaissa Mendoza

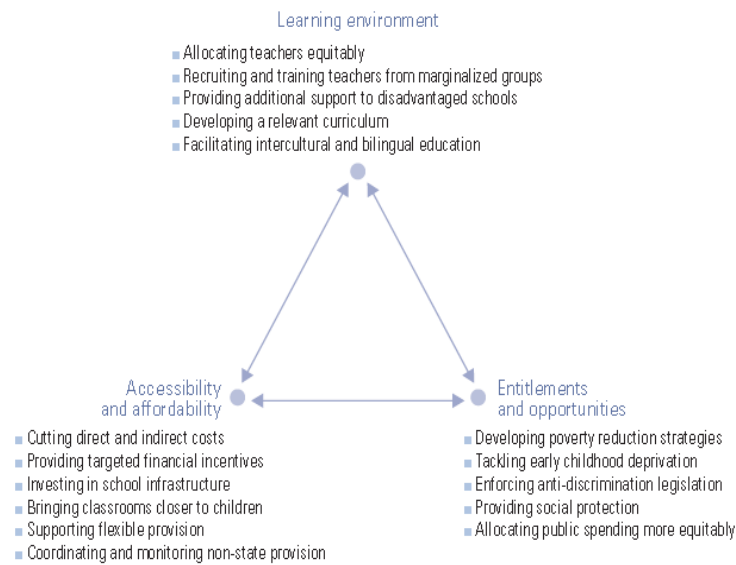
Summary of Discussions:

- Some ideas on the concept of interdisciplinarity include:
 - Analyzing issues or problems or phenomena using a variety of lenses (e.g., history, sociology, philosophical)
 - Connecting one's lens with those of other disciplines but maintaining one's discipline/lens
 - Use of holistic approach
 - Non-compartmentalization of teaching and of learning the different subject areas
- The values in inclusive education are: equity, humility, congruence, openness, respect, 4 cardinal values of justice, courage, wisdom and moderation (self-control, temperance), and empowerment.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Some strategies that align with inclusive education:
 - Based on the Inclusive Education triangle framework of UNESCO (2010) (refer to figure on the next page), it is best to look at the entirety of the education system and not just at access or the re-tooling of teachers and personnel. There should be harmonization of policies and practices from the bigger picture to specific situations.
 - Target learners who are at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement (e.g., affirmative action for PWDs through provision of scholarships for them)
 - Provide appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non-formal educational settings of all types of learners, especially the marginalized, excluded and underachieving. This can be done by modifying the content, approaches, structures and strategies of education to cover the needs of all children of different ages, conviction, background, and abilities
 - Identifying barriers to education and removing these barriers (e.g., policies are not clear and disseminated)
 - Creating digital platforms to support inclusive education

Source: UNESCO, 2010



- Adopt the whole-school approach where the actions of the school community are collective, cohesive and collaborative.
- Other issues that were discussed:
 - Are the LGBTs a marginalized group? Why do they feel marginalized? Is access sufficient in inclusive education? If access is provided but the quality of learning experience is not welcoming of other sexual orientations and gender identities, and has not integrated their experiences and needs, then is the system still inclusive?
 - How do we ensure that the next generations would be different and would make a difference, and would not revert to their “default” thinking and practices?
 - We should provide learners and students the “open space” for reflection and the flexibility to innovate (e.g., the possibility of a four-day school week for students) in order that all learners (especially the disadvantaged) may become “self-propelling”.
 - Start changes in early childhood.

S6F

Sustainable and Participatory Mechanisms in Inclusive Education

#inclusivepractices

Convener: Nonie Ahaddas

Participants: Ildebrando Caday, Liza Amor Dinampo, Agee Liñan, Jovelín Balantin, Franco Teves, Rene Lopos

Documenter: Lovie Moneva

Summary of Discussions:

- The Mindanao Youth for Development (MYDev) is a program supported by USAID for the development of out-of-school youth (OSY) in Mindanao. The program has two pathways for OSY: technical-vocational (tech-voc) education and alternative learning systems. In the program, all OSY should go through life skills training for 11 days.
- There is an OSY Development Alliance, which is a multi-stakeholder local body to institutionalize services for OSY. Membership depends on the project site, but OSYs are well-represented. They plan out program for OSY, the direction of the programs, and mobilize resources.
- Since the start of the program in 2013, the number of OSY representatives in the local bodies gradually increased, giving them a bigger voice. With this, more activities and services are given by the local government. There are now more bridging activities.
- Depending on the needs of the project site, program for drug surrenderees are offered. Although, they are not profiled as drug surrenderees, but as part of the OSY sector—it is important not to label them for their security. The program is more than the addiction, but the insurgency—the program is for peace-building. Thus, vocation is more viable as a solution as refuge from poverty. The challenge is the lawless groups who recruit children and poverty.
- Success stories:
 - As a program, there are no definite data, only information in the own localities. In Lamitan, for example, the 2 ALS completers recently were given further training for organic agriculture. There are 9 from Lamitan who underwent training, 3 of the 9 were employed by DAF.
 - In terms of data, the program surveys it by site. They have a program-wide tracking system using three tools: (1) development asset profile, (2) youth perception survey, and (3) youth employment survey. These are administered before the start of the training and six months after the completion of the program.
 - In screening, the participants should be OSY and between 15-24 years old. Approximately, there are more males than females enrolled in the program. Still, it is alarming to know that there is a huge number of OSYs.

- In the program, reasons why the participants drop out of school is unknown. The respective LGUs do the research to find the reason behind school drop outs.
- According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), because the program venues are on conflict areas and poorest provinces, these are more susceptible to lawlessness. Unlike in urban centers, it is more challenging for the smaller LGUs. There are nuances to the context of inclusivity and where they come from—the challenge is to have support systems.
- One of the challenges in implementing the program is attracting the OSYs to join the. In practice, they visit the LGUs—from city up to the barangay—to gather support from the officials. They visit houses to explain the program to the parents and the youth.
- Not all financial resources will be provided by the program, its funds are intended only for the ALS and tech-voc training. To sustain it, the LGUs allocate funds to the other aspects of the program.
- Regarding structure, the mayor is the head of the alliance but is represented by a designated focal person. The alliance is composed of multi-stakeholders: local government units, government agencies, private sectors, religious sector, etc.
- In Lamitan, the mayor is a champion of education. She wanted to implement education reforms in Lamitan City due to the decrease of achievement test scores. In accordance to the reform of the Sangguniang Kabataan, an executive order was signed to create the youth development office. For 4 years, in Basilan, it is the only LGU who celebrates governance week. They prioritize OSYs in all their activities like leadership training and digital literacy training.
- The design of the program is to create an alliance within the LGU. Least priority is given to the OSY sector before, but because of the MYDev program, OSY became LGU's priority. But to institutionalize it, there is a need to create structures to facilitate the program. It should be made into local policy to oblige the LGU to take action.
- In Isabela, legislative action was made as they passed a youth code.
- In Lamitan, it is still in the executive, but it is the goal to make it a policy to make sure that the program will be sustained regardless of change of administration.
- The aim really is to institutionalize the OSYDA mechanism so that it will not be affected by change in administration.
- The institutionalization for this structure now relies on the respective LGUs as the head of the OSYDA.
- In Quezon City, there are urban programs for OSY. There is a settlement area called Bistekville for informal settlers to give social support services. QC can still provide settlement places because it still has land to negotiate for socialized centers.

- There are also off-site settlements outside of QC. There is a MOA between QC and the city of relocation. Services are still provided by QC to the relocated settlers.
- Success rate is not 100% but there is an attempt to provide social services and jobs.
- In Baguio, OSYs are not that many. Mostly, they come from nearby towns.
- In Makati, the focus is education. Everything is free. There are programs for the drug surrenderees, where they receive a certificate after three months. Sports programs are cascaded in the barangay. It is the barangay's responsibility to sustain the program.
- In LGU, there are gaps that the CSO can fill. In urban centers, resources are easier than in rural high-risk areas. That is the irony of policies. The bigger and more established LGUs have more access to resources, while the smaller LGUs need to have capacity-building. Chicken and egg. Funds and capacity.
 - Bigger LGUs have a brother-sister relationship with smaller LGUs. We have to share capacity and resources. QC, for example, funded a program for ground zero in Marawi.
- EDC has external partners to provide additional resources for the MYDev program. For example, Global Vision 2020 will train the youth in refractive errors in the eye. The lenses made will be sold, and proceeds will be given to the participants. The amount of the kit will be paid back and will be given to another participant.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- How can this program which shows success, be replicated, even without the USAID?
 - For sustainability, it should be replicable and long-term.
 - The major success of the program should be replicated even without the help of USAID.
 - Projects are finite. So, the challenge in development work is to be able to generate their own resources to support the programs.
 - The OSYDA mechanism is similar to that of Abot-Alam program of DepEd.
- In terms of sustainability, there is a need to institutionalize the program and generate resources.

S6J

Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) in Inclusive Education

#inclusivepractices

#employment

Convener: Maritess Romen

Participants: Anunciacion Pagdilao, Florielyn Antalan, Maritess Romen, Hiyas Torneo, Rolando Juanillo, Jenifer Capistrano, Candra Penoliar

Documenter: Emmy Yanga-Domingo

Summary of Discussions:

Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Regional Office VIII

- TESDA advocates inclusive education, i.e., education for all
- The beneficiaries of their skills trainings include: IPs, rebel returnees, drug surrenderees, etc.
- Complementing DepEd's Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track in Senior High School, the role of TESDA is to conduct assessments. Its assessment does not require completion of a formal program—certifications can be issued based on experience upon assessment.
- TESDA just concluded a seminar with the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) in providing

inmates skills and livelihood trainings such as brick making and food processing.

Department of Education (DepEd)

- The Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Program is a program providing an alternative way of learning for out-of-school children, youth and adults who are literate but who have not completed the 10 years of basic education mandated by the Philippine Constitution. Through this program, school dropouts are able to complete elementary and high school education outside the formal school system.
- DepEd, through its Bureau of Learning Delivery-Student Inclusion Division, aligns the TVL curriculum with TESDA's competencies.
- Under the Voucher Program, public Grade 10 completers will be automatically given vouchers for a discount in non-DepEd schools for Senior High School. Grade 10 completers from private schools are also allowed to apply but are subject to approval.

Pinili Polytechnic College in Ilocos Norte

- Pinili Polytechnic College is a TESDA partner in Ilocos Norte. They provide skills trainings such as ICT, electronics, hollow block making, garlic production courses, as well as assessments for that. They have already covered four municipalities and is now expanding. They have three students who have impairment, so they also offer to them skills training on nail care and massage, etc.

Bayambang Pangasinan DepEd

- The Bayambang Mayor is very interested in TVL as an important instrument to achieve the municipality's vision of zero poverty. Their theme is "Laban ng Mahirap Para sa Bayan."
- The representative shared that Bayambang was among the Top 4 for ALS implementers at the national level. They are targeting to be number 1 and targets drug surrenderees for skills training.

GIZ

- Focused on water and sanitation (WATSAN) of the schools. They are interested in improving toilets in schools and wish to link with TESDA to tap those who are trained on masonry to help with toilet improvement.

Challenges

- There is some mismatch, so TESDA encourages TVL students to identify their training needs
- For drug surrenderees, DOH should certify that they must be fit for training
- Were the certificates actually used?
- Are OFWs allowed to acquire skills training from TESDA?

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- TESDA suggested to have a skills mapping survey of the communities to guide in interventions and

activities. The communities should also create a registry in their respective cities and municipalities.

- With the ASEAN economic integration, there is a need for TESDA to re-align competencies to requirements of industries in ASEAN countries. There should be migration of qualifications to keep up with the regional competencies.
- Considering this, DepEd should also revise its curriculum to align with the new TESDA-migrated training regulations in the TVL track offerings.
- With the forthcoming Industry 4.0 or Artificial Intelligence, TESDA should also be ready to respond to the challenges of a new industry.
- A new monitoring and evaluation mechanism must be developed to enhance to program.

S60

Inclusive Education For Me is _____

#diverseneeds

#inclusivepractices

Convener: Sarah Jane dela Rosa

Participants: Marvin Alde, Divina Mateo, Mary Ruth Salonga, Leahgracia Velayo, Mylene Ordilla, Gerald Magno, Rodehlia Macaspac, Josephine Bernardino, Arthur Perez, Minguela Ting, Eloisa Garsi, Rembert Bautista, Paulo Dias Menezes, Nadzida Mohd Nadzin, Jupiter Petilla, Tricia Mariza Mercado, Mylene Bajum, Francisca Tiburcio, Angelica Sabinta, Adeline Luarez, Emely Pelobello, Raquel Callangan, Erwin Felipe, Michelle Dulay, Miriam Coprado, Kimberly Macadangdang, Monishah Shah, Mary Lonna Buenafe, Myint Zaw Oo, Irene Marie Malabanan, Tess Felipe, Bouavanh Lusa, Carmencita Pintor, Rosalie de Guzman, Maria Nessa Espina, Jury Yosores, Lito Adanza, Luong Viet Thai, Rex Bernardo, Cecil Arcadis, Cherlie Tiamson, Richard Subia, Nur Masturah Ibrahim, Madilen Espiritu, Tun Tun Min, Jennifer Asing, Yolanda De Las Alas, Ephraim Membrere, Danilo Ungang, Mendato Marcaban, Celedonio Danda, Juanita Morato, Erma Jamon, Wenefredo Rubio, Xomsihapanya Dokkham, Pateng Louanlamoun, Chandler Ibabao, Elvira Egay, Evangeline Asuncion, Niraphone Keobounlome, Nimfa Maca, Melissa Borela

Documenter: Genesis Montero

Summary of Discussions:

- The participants were asked on their definition of inclusive education: all-in, liberating, for all, equitable, empowerment, important, and for everyone.
- Sarah shares her story of inclusive education.
 - Sarah pushes for inclusive education for those who are suffering from disabilities, economic disadvantage, or anyone from marginalized sectors.
 - Sarah was able to attend a normal class for kindergarten in their barangay. She was persistent enough to be enrolled.
 - After kindergarten, her mom was able to find her a school for her elementary education. However, after a few months, Sarah left the school due to bullying as per the teacher's advice.
 - Sarah was endorsed to a school for people with learning disability. She stayed for eleven years. But then she was told that she must transfer to an inclusive school or a regular public school. It was a waste since she was growing very well.
 - She went back to the school that rejected her. However, she was placed in the SPED class which shouldn't be since she already spent 11 years in the learning school.

- Due to economic constraint, Sarah had to adjust her schooling. Spending PHP 60 is a heavy burden for the family.
- She experienced another episode of bullying in her neighborhood. This made her stop for a few years. Then, her grandmother encouraged her to go back to school which accepted her again.
- Teachers must show their students that they are accepted and welcome. This kind of affection will greatly help in their learning. If Sarah never experienced this, she would never have been able to advocate for inclusive education. All the insults she suffered were nothing because of the love and care her teachers showed her. What Sarah thinks is most important for inclusive education are love and acceptance. The tools teachers use will only be useless without these.
- Having difficulty in writing, Sarah depends on her classmates' help in writing down notes or a cellphone she takes with her. But a teacher once told her, "You have to learn how to write. Else, you wouldn't learn."
- During P.E. classes, Sarah separates herself. But her teacher encouraged her to join. To help Sarah, her teacher provides her with modules to assist in her learning.
- Her developments, however, did not stop the bullying. From time to time, she's being called "SPED". She experiences harassment as well. One time she was asked, "Hey girl, what's your sickness?" To which she replied, "It's not a sickness. It's a disability." Emphasizing the difference between the two.
- One parent spoke to Sarah and told her that she is an inspiration to her child. Another parent of a child with special needs expressed her longing for her child to experience the good education Sarah had. This helped the group realize how inaccessible education is for those who have learning disabilities.
- Sarah is concerned with the PWD's. They are unable to get an education because they are not treated with love and acceptance. Even here in Metro Manila, there is lack of such care. How much more difficult is it for those living in the far-flung areas?

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Love and acceptance—these are the true pillars of inclusive education.

S6P

Project-Based Learning for Students with Special Needs

#diverseneeds

#classroominstruction

Convener: Razaleigh Kate Jumawan

Participants: Shailini Gestosani, Gerry Rojo, Victor R. Fedirigan, Irene Barzaga

Documenter: Euni Bagalihog

Summary of Discussions:

- Some studies show that Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an effective teaching method
- PBL is a problem-centered curriculum; it integrates lessons to cover several skills in one project; it can be used to address current issues
- For comparison, Competency-Based Learning is an approach where the target skills are defined/identified prior to the activities and they are standard for all students; in PBL, the students perform the activities first then they are assessed on the competencies each student has learned through the activities they have performed
- There are no lectures from the teacher.
- The teacher gives a problem for the students to solve; the students come

up with a project that would solve the problem; each project requires a very detailed planning of activities

- Inputs from the students are very important; they are more empowered and motivated to finish the project if they are asked about what they would like to learn and how they would like to go about learning it
- Move away from the traditional way of teaching such as spoon-feeding information to the students; there should be an equal relationship between teacher and students
- PBL can be an individual or a group activity; the method itself can teach students self-management and cooperation
- Possible challenge in the use of PBL in Alternative Learning System (ALS): how do you meet about 2000 target competencies in a short period of time? Do not focus too much on the competencies prior to planning the projects; let the students perform tasks and complete their projects; you'll be surprised to find out that they have acquired a good number of competencies in the process
- The method is not only for special needs children; it is probably being used by many teachers in different settings without them knowing they are using PBL; they just need more practice in facilitation and abstraction

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- DepEd needs to train teachers on how to effectively use PBL
- Teachers should be encouraged to use PBL as a teaching method

S7A

Becoming An Inclusive Facilitator and Teacher

#inclusiveteachers

Participants: Rosella Torrecampo, Nitin Paranjape, Jovelyn Bacartin, Eloisa Garsi, Chandler Ibabao, Kimberly Macadangdang, Mikako Ono, Rogin Christ Eribal, Aurelio Alvarez, Jesusa Yadao, Helen Acop, Ligaya Bautista, and Adelina Velasco

Documenter: Benedict Santos

Summary of Discussions:

- Participants shared their reasons for attending this learning conversation:
 - They want to know more about inclusive education to become a better educator. They lack training and knowledge to become an inclusive teacher.
 - They want to learn strategies and innovations in engaging students who were not receptive to new ideas. They want to learn how to handle students with diverse needs such as speech disorders, behavioral problems, etc.
 - They want to emphasize that everyone should have the heart for inclusive education.
 - They want to understand what kind of facilitation would lead to genuine learning and to learn

how to manage students who challenge authority. They are interested in what the role of the facilitator entailed.

- Most teachers deal with regular and mainstream students who might actually be dealing with challenges related to inclusivity in education.
 - Students might be feeling oppressed by teachers' classroom behaviour, management style, language, etc. For instance, the use of gender insensitive language might be offensive to women and/or the LGBT.
- One reliable measure of being a good teacher is whether one can find out and address every student's learning needs.
 - There are tools available to find out the ideal learning environment and strategy for students.
 - Finding out learning barriers faced by students can help teachers be more inclusive.
 - Teachers can bank on the diversity of students. Advanced students may be asked to help those who are falling behind, which can also promote collaboration and inclusion.
- The gifted ones might be feeling left out in the programs currently being implemented for students with special needs.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- In doing research, educators should explore ways on how to deal with policies that keep them from gathering data about the students.

S7K

The Role of Millennials in Inclusive Education

#generations

Convener: Francisca Tiburcio

Participants: Mylene Bajum, Mary Ruth Salonga, Carmencita Pintor, Divina Mateo, Rosalie De Guzman

Documenter: Gianna Emilyn Earnshaw

Summary of Discussions:

- The Generation Y, or the millennials, are born between 1981 to 1997. They are more inclined to the use and access of technology. They are exposed on actual school setting and plays an important role in the society.
- Since inclusive programs were being promoted, learners should be aware of and be involved in all these programs and activities. They should be educated on the concept of inclusive education through the right people and resources. They should also be given equal access and opportunity to education.
- The programs of DepEd should be enhanced, anchored on inclusive education, and be properly implemented. The government should provide programs for persons with disabilities, especially in the remote areas. Currently, the

government have initiated efforts and ways to include millennials in inclusive education.

- The youth should know their commitment and purpose in life—they serve as a voice to start change towards development.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

- Seek help from external stakeholders and other organizations to promote inclusive education
- Parents should be open-minded and encourage their children to go to the school system.

S7L

Helping Young Learners Develop Lifelong Skills Through Inclusive Education

#lifelonglearning

Convener: Divina Mateo

Participants: Carmencita Pintor, Nimfa Maca, Rosalie de Guzman, Mylene Bajum, Mary Ruth Salonga, Francisca Tiburcio

Documenter: Jocelyn Ilanan

Summary of Discussions:

- Lifelong skills may include the following: effective communication, problem solving skills, creative thinking skills, and self-awareness.

- Classroom-based celebrations or performances have been helpful in assessing students learning
- There are cases where children with disabilities (CWD) are not accepted by the schools.
- To give opportunities to CWD, inclusive education must be strengthened. This will provide equal opportunities for all learners.
- Mainstreaming CWD allows them to feel that they are not different from other children; however, it is important that teachers also exert effort in giving extra time and attention to CWD to catch up with the lessons.
- It is better to accept and understand what the learners can do rather than to focus on their disabilities.
- Parents may also be a hindrance to their children's education; some parents of CWD do not allow them to attend school, but to just stay at home.
- We must give all learners a chance to discover and hone their talents despite their disabilities.
- Promoting inclusive education is a big challenge for the school and the community.

What will we do now? What needs to happen next?

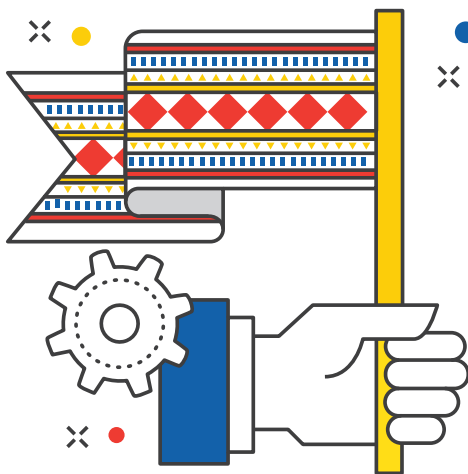
- We must advocate inclusive education not only in schools, but also in the community. Advocacy campaigns on inclusive education would be helpful.
- Informing and orienting parents about inclusive education during

parent-teacher meetings would be helpful in advocating and developing awareness on inclusive education.

- Passing a bill mandating companies to employ people with disabilities may have a great impact on inclusive education.



PRIORITY AREAS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



× Inclusive Education for Indigenous Peoples in Mindanao

Ensuring full inclusion in education and promoting lifelong learning for indigenous peoples—especially in conflict areas like Mindanao—is highlighted as one of the priorities in inclusive education. Children from indigenous groups remain less likely to be enrolled in school and are more likely to underperform.

[READ REPORT ON PAGE 100](#)

Building an Inclusive Culture at the Different Levels of Governance in Education

Education ministries are primary responsible for ensuring access to, promoting equity in, and improving the quality of basic education. To ensure inclusion, all education agencies and providers must efficiently implement the policies and guidelines in nurturing an inclusive learning environment.

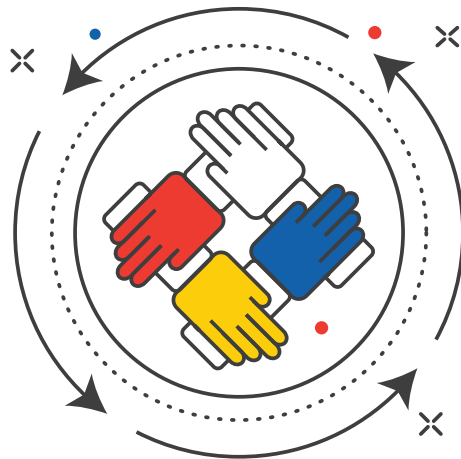
[READ REPORT ON PAGE 71](#)



Revolutionizing Education System for Inclusion

An inclusive education system removes barriers limiting the participation and achievement of learners, respects diverse needs, abilities and characteristics, and eliminates discriminations in the learning environment.

[READ REPORT ON PAGE 117](#)



Engaging Stakeholders in Inclusive Education

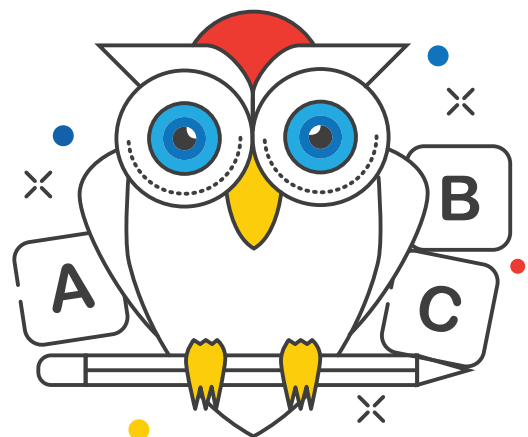
Education stakeholders play a key role in building an inclusive learning environment for every learner. Through the awareness, acceptance, and support of all stakeholders, inclusive education will be a reality.

[READ REPORT ON PAGE 84](#)

Delivering Learning Opportunities to Diverse Early Learners

Stigma and discrimination among children starts at a very young age; hence, they should be taught that not all children are the same and to learn to live harmoniously together. Communication between the parents and the schools is very important to create an inclusive environment both at home and school.

[READ REPORT ON PAGE 39](#)



Individual Action Commitments

With the identified priorities in mind, the participants developed their personal action agendas and posted it on the commitments wall.

-
- Inclusive education is a culture of love and change
 - With delivering learning opportunities to diverse early learners as my top priority, I pledge to be a catalyst of change in providing diverse learners with varied learning opportunities by supervising my teachers in the delivery of instruction. Through this, the optimum goal of the DepEd will be realized with the collaborative efforts of the school head and teachers.
 - As a school head, I do hereby commit myself to support the engagement of stakeholder/community.
 - As a school heads in DepEd Gapan City Division, I do hereby commit to support and give my best to build an inclusive culture at the different levels of governance at DepEd.
 - To feature more stories and materials that will highlight inclusive education for our audience to read and learn from.
 - To accommodate all IPs without conditions; to conduct child-mapping to identify and serve OSY; to accept all people from all walks of life; convene monthly meetings with stakeholders for planning, implementation and follow-up; embrace everyone.
 - To engage our community to participate and support all level of learners.
 - The conference has made me realize that inclusive education is not only for people who are known as marginalized but also for those who are left unnoticed. Inclusive education is a responsibility of everyone. Culture of inclusivity can be achieved if everyone takes their part and be involved.
 - Strengthening stakeholders participation in inclusive education.
 - Start inclusion in myself; adapt, inculcate, practice, and elucidate inclusion to my stakeholders.
 - Integrate in every learning instruction by encouraging stakeholders' participation—inclusive education means no one must be deprived of what is to be learned. People in all walks of life have equal opportunities to choose and learn in order to survive. As an educator, I would continue to inculcate to my learners and future leaders that they have to continue spreading the good deeds of reaching others to learn.
 - As a part of the Student Inclusion Division under the Bureau of Learning Delivery, I will personally commit to work with compassion and understanding with the

different people in our office, which has different personalities. As a mother, I will push my daughter to realize that there are different circumstances that help people to reach their full potential. As a part of legislative on my place, I will support top 5 priorities. As a father, as a government official by way of making legislative action and committed to support for benefit of others.

- To advocate practice and sustain an inclusive culture in school where all stakeholders work together to ensure that students are catered to—especially those who need quality learning opportunities
- Support inclusive education. Education is really significant and each of us is responsible for this.
- For S2P: Inclusive Culture = A way of life that welcomes all. Way = Method/ approach. Life = Principles/practices/ Welcome = Goodwill. All = Humanity/ Humanness
- Learning/teaching/sharing together methods/approaches/principles/ practices of goodwill and humanity (aka LOVE).
- For me, it is confirmed that everyone has equal rights to quality education and therefore, I commit to spread the news not only to my teachers, parents but to all our stakeholders. It's everybody's concern!
- I commit to have an open mind and heart regarding inclusive education. Don't focus in negative barriers but in seeking solutions even through small steps to address those barriers.
- I will try my best to bring the stories I heard here to more people, to inspire

many. I also hope to see and learn more about the unique approach and strategy in learning and participating in our activities and workshops.

- To share the stories that I learned so other people will also be inspired and realized that inclusive education is really possible.
- I will actively participate in promoting inclusive culture and values. I will also help in raising awareness about inclusive education by teaching other people what it means to be inclusive and to take part in implementing different initiatives.
- Make inclusion a reality starting within my jurisdiction before expanding in a wider scope in the society I belong.
- Inclusive education is a culture of belongingness, compassion and understanding that everyone deserves quality education regardless of race, disabilities, religion and economic status in life. With this, I commit to be an **advocate** of inclusive education: at home, in the community and in the school where I work as a school head. I believe that it should be institutionalized in all levels of governance and I will start/ continue in my own level. Thank you so much for this conference. Inclusive education needs no boundaries—it is simply a right of everyone in any place right for him.
- To help or encourage stakeholders to be a part of inclusive education. An inclusive teacher should have leadership and integrity.
- We need to get everyone involved in the discussion of inclusive education which means institutionalizing and

creating policies, mechanisms and bodies with sectoral stakeholders. Do a summit!

- Have dialogues with the faculty and staff in the education and technology department of universities regarding the need for accessible study materials and assistive technologies that propose to offer solutions; organize Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression (SOGIE) training for students, teachers, and DepEd to educate, correct misconceptions and reduce, if not completely eliminate, biases against LGBT.
- My plan of action for inclusive education in the Philippines are the following: draft and formulate policies in support of the implementation of inclusive education in the Philippines; enhance the K to 12 curriculum to be responsive to the needs of different types of learners; develop learning materials in support of inclusive education; develop and strengthen monitoring and evaluation tools for inclusive education; develop assessment tools; develop innovative learning delivery models for all components of inclusive education.
- Research on technologies that will aid in education and development; engage in dialogues with various stakeholders especially education on SOGIE. Encourage schools to have support groups for students to combat bullying; push for accessible and inclusive education through networking with policy groups, decision-makers and social media influencers.
- Increase awareness of culture-based learning through stories that will be made available on social media.
- Follow up by formulating the precise policies on the innovation and development of inclusive education.
- Building an inclusive culture at the different levels of governance at DepEd so that they will understand further the demands and requirements of learners with special needs; support program in the school and in the communities.
- Given the identified priorities in the conference, as a teacher, I commit myself to embrace inclusive education tighter. Be an advocate to my community in promoting inclusive education and help them better understand what inclusive education truly is. Organize inclusive education seminar/workshop for pre-service teachers and faculty members in my school interactive and interdisciplinary strategies to inclusive education in Mindanao.
- Reach out to those who are out of school in various communities including those that are hidden; revolutionize learning using digital platform and prepare them to be back to mainstream school and share the stories of students' struggle to success!
- Keep an open mind and welcome them to your and my world— then we can understand them all. Engagement at all levels— international, national, and local for the sake of inclusive education; development of a platform

for exchange in order to get commitment of all stakeholders to these changes.

- As an educator, we must support all programs and projects of DepEd for the benefit of our learners. We must give all help.
- To organize a stakeholders' conference supporting inclusive education in our province, Camarines Norte, this year; assist in capacitating teachers about changing the mindset towards inclusive education this year.
- Continuously advocate inclusive education for persons with disabilities (PWDs)
- Together with my organization, I will conduct an awareness program about inclusive education in the community
- Through open communication; let them feel that they belong; advocacy campaign
- Taking steps in the institutionalization of Balanced and Inclusive Education (BIE): setting the tone in the school; conducting information campaign to all stakeholders including students, parents, teachers, LGUs, NGOs, etc.; involve all stakeholders in the planning and implementation, etc.; monitoring the implementation
- Provide technical assistance to DepEd personnel especially to teachers; to be the champion/strong advocate of inclusive education to all stakeholders; strengthen collaboration and networking with different groups
- To become an enabler in promoting inclusive education; to give focus and special attention to the needs of IPs

and disadvantaged sectors of society through the provision of programs and service of TESDA; to push the agenda of inclusive education

- As a father and a school leader, I commit to be a catalyst in eradicating barriers in inclusive education
- Revolutionizing the education system for inclusion for better future of the nation
- To start teaching within the family; to support programs for early learning
- As a school head, I am encouraged to start the change in our school. I will be advocating, not only within the school but as well as in the community influencing the school to support inclusive education as a means of helping each one to acquire education. I will promote the **no one should be left behind** advocacy.
- To initiate educational reforms that will ensure the promotion of inclusive education
- Be an advocate of revolutionized inclusive education system and culture at all levels of governance in the DepEd NCR
- Support and give suggestions for improvement of education; our enthusiasm and efforts will influence the engagement of the stakeholders
- Engage in ongoing dialogue about inclusive education with colleagues across international borders; share and celebrate the never-ending stories of inclusive education
- Collaborate and work on different potential practices that will assist in the implementation of different programs, projects and activities in

my school that aims to serve and provide relevant and meaningful learning experiences to all pupils

- I am really interested in this topic because in my school I try to encourage stakeholders to participate.
- I would like to increase our students' awareness with regards to IPs. Hence, I will make sure that our curriculum will be enriched with this.
- Leading our community people to make sure that equal access to quality education will be given to all school-age children regardless of cultural and spiritual belief.
- Education cannot stand alone. That is why we should engage stakeholders in school—involve the communities private companies, investors, etc. Ask them for help to set or join the student activities.
- Engage stakeholders to be involved in education.
- Conscious, deliberate effort to integrate inclusive education in the course that I teach and will include such in my syllabus; as a consultant for DepEd: frame topics and workplans through the lens of inclusive education; as a literacy worker: make materials and deliver instructions giving primary consideration to being inclusive; as a mother: open and sustain conversations about acceptance, diversity and opportunities for all
- As a mother, educator and as a DepEd personnel, I would like to give my commitment to advocate inclusive education—I will be a steward of education for all. By

understanding and considering all their needs, culture, religion and belief to be considered in any program that DepEd will be doing. The commitment of listening to all of them. To make our program truly successful.

- To strengthen the collaboration of the agency with the DepEd to the private stakeholders; to support the proposals, projects for the benefit of our learners
- Education is for all; no frontier; no one left behind!
- We need to create an enabling and inclusive education for people with special needs. To realize it we need support from stakeholders.
- In my own capacity, I will make sure that the education system is revolutionized with the values and beliefs of the minority. The system has to be responsive and sensitive to the smaller groups. Individuality of culture will be given its due space in the process.
- To utilize my knowledge and skills in IT and actively participate in advocating inclusive education particularly in developing learning opportunities to diverse learners.
- As a teacher, as a victim, and at the same time, a victimizer, it is hard for us to change if we will not put our power or start the change in our self. In an education system, I think it is not only the system that needs change, but us. We need to be engaged, we need to love, we need to embrace, and we need to be responsible, not tomorrow but today.

- Supplement laws, policies and regulations in education with the inclusion of inclusive education program, not focusing on classroom type approach but widening the alternative modes of education in order to accommodate all sectors of the community; institutionalize this policy and recommend down to the grassroots
- To sustain internal and external stakeholders in the Division of Mandaue City, Cebu, Philippines; to strengthen partnerships with stakeholders in the DepEd
- To advocate and be a part of the delivery of inclusive education in my own capacity
- I will no longer practice inclusion of inclusive education instead I will make it as my way of life. No more exclusion in the classroom or in the community. I will live with inclusion always inside me. We need to set an example
- I commit myself to be more sensitive to the needs of my learners and consider their diversity. Change should begin in me and I challenge myself to set an example to my colleagues; I should recognize every bit that my PTA/stakeholders contribute to my school in the classroom level by giving them certificates of appreciation and recognition in their continuous support to education; I should see to it that our brothers/sisters from Mindanao should be of great importance as to our brothers/sisters in the mainstream; fairness should be observed in all aspects of the system. Serve with a purpose with all my heart.
- I will always be hands-on in the full implementation of inclusive education
- The best way to engage stakeholders in inclusive education is to involve them, empower them, educate them and recognize their importance in the system. Stakeholders' forum is the best venue for this activity.
- Strengthen youth participation in education; work towards inclusive policies, education government programs for marginalized youths
- Advocate inclusive education and prepare teachers, nonteaching staff and all stakeholders for inclusion
- Tap potential stakeholders who will serve as partners in providing our public school learners with safe, gender sensitive and learner-centered learning environment.
- Implement the balance and inclusive education not just within mainstream and ALS schools but also within the community
- Inclusive education should start at home
- As one of the stakeholders, I commit to support the implementation of inclusive education through provision of all support available with me and my organization
- As a teacher in the **teacher education program**, I commit to train future teachers who will have empathy, the skills and the heart to teach every kind of learner despite of their difference in culture, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, learning abilities and disabilities. I further commit to improve my teaching methods, the learning environment

and my whole perception of teaching towards a better inclusive education for every child.

- Personal advocacy and empowerment through continuous training of all stakeholders; try and engage in your level of comfort and be guided by your personal vision
- Reinventing the education system for inclusion; promote advocacy on reinventing the education system for inclusion
- Engaging stakeholders: create avenues of understanding and awareness to create a culture of respect; conversations on what can be done; to hear unheard voices; work together
- I feel great in this conference. The opportunity to meet educators from other countries in our region. The opportunity to share ideas which indicates our love for the children. We have passion in education. Thank God we are the educators of the future generation
- Bring inclusion to the tertiary education of the De La Salle (DLS) Schools by engaging the DLSP network, opening conversations, identifying opportunities and working together.
- I commit to provide stakeholders the chance to design, implement and celebrate the success of our programs for OSYs; running/walking further even when the OSY decided to stop; consider the difference of each OSY learner; further engage the parents and guardians in the development of their children.
- Advocacy on inclusive education for indigenous Filipinos in Mindanao; help mine the collective wisdom and action on building an inclusive culture at different levels of governance at DepEd
- As a result of this conference, I am all the more convinced to enhance our ALS program and continue to improve other programs on inclusive education
- As one of the stakeholders, the main action I must do is to have a proper coordination with different schools and provide them with necessities to support the programs and activities they are conducting. We have to be united and properly acquainted to each other to promote harmonious relationships and to be partners of developing their schools into a competitive one.
- To dream, to imagine, to increase flexible learning opportunities for the marginalized learners
- Ensure development of learners; the role of education is nurturing the creativity and emotional growth of learners, helping them to acquire values and attitudes for responsible citizenship; quantity must pass the test of equity.
- I am committed to embrace inclusive education with unconditional love and implement this in my workplace without reservations.
- Government strategy.
- Inclusive education for extension of communities and partners of state universities and colleges (SUCs)

- Conducting a division-wide capacity building for the professional learning community
- Having attended this conference, I would be willing to share all the learnings that I have to the school level and district level. If given a chance to the division level. I will advocate inclusive education wherever I go especially in the different levels of DepEd; be a good example to the education system; I will replicate good and best practices from the sharings of my co-participants
- Do volunteer work in Marawi, Sabah, and Bangalore
- Build more partnerships for inclusion and be more inclusive
- As a legislator, Board Member, and Chairman of the Committee of Education in Lanao del Norte, I am willing to support and make myself available in any activities in revolutionizing the education system for inclusion.
- Empower young people by sharing these stories in inclusion; everyone has a chance to change the world to a better place; further advocate inclusive education
- I am now willing to share the stories and be the voice of the undocumented and continue to learn as much
- Intensify and strengthen collaboration on these priorities to sustain efforts and eventually make an impact to the solve the problems
- Support projects for the establishment of skills training and livelihood centers in resettlement areas; work on allocation of bigger local government budget for ALS and equivalency programs; support technical skills training programs for adult learners and OSYs
- Be more engaged and strengthen advocacies in inclusive education
- Be mindful in welcoming everyone in my family, work, community; listen more to what my child has to say about her own learning process; empower her to make her own choice and decisions; listen more to my colleagues and recognize the contributions of each person; advocate for inclusion during consultation meetings and discussions with DepEd
- As a person in charge of training in our office, I commit to share and inspire teachers to open their hearts to welcome all learners in the classroom
- Echoing the four priorities to my organization and partners; develop action plan on how the priorities can be embedded in our current inclusive education program; promote and advocate inclusive education especially the 5 priorities to our implementing partners in the community
- Act as a bridge and a connector to facilitate synergy in supporting OSCY and adults in their lifelong learning journey
- As a government employee, I pledge to encourage development partners to prioritize inclusive education in their projects.

- I am inspired with the stories to work better each day as instruments to bringing inclusive education for all
 - I am committed to serve with the best of my abilities to provide basic quality education to teach young learners from different walks of life, regardless of their status, appearance, gender and others
 - As a teacher, practice and nurture a worldview of inclusiveness in a system and in a classroom not built for and cognizant of forms of inclusion beyond the standard designations of PWD, SPEDs, etc.; as an administrator, enhance teaching and training programs towards an articulation of and actual practice of inclusion.
 - Inclusive education should be responsive and feasible in any kind of environment; hence, policies should address this
 - As a participant in the 15th IC, I will be an agent to spread the news about inclusive education. I will also support the learners to have equal education.
 - Committed to serve and be part of every endeavor in advocating inclusivity at all levels
 - Building an inclusive culture at different levels of governance at DepEd: major consideration; integrates in all; communicate, live and practice
 - Continue to support DepEd in enhancing policies and programs to make inclusive education a reality; mobilize youth groups for inclusive education advocacy; support development and implementation of inclusive education pedagogy;
- collaborate with other development partners to move the agenda for making all schools in Philippines inclusive
- As a classroom teacher, continue to promote and build a more inclusive classroom; engage other teachers and school constituents to conversations that would promote action in having a better inclusive education system; support a unified national curriculum for inclusive education
 - Continue to grow and learn on how to help learners build trust, love and self-confidence to go to school through inclusive education
 - Human resource development for early childhood educators
 - Advocacy and social mobilization for ECCD as part of the educational continuum
 - I will check whether the inclusive education policy has been read by DepEd Asec. Nepomuceno Malaluan. If he has not, I will find out what I need to do for him to read it.
 - I will check with the former Advisory Council (for inclusive education) if the meeting on Monday will push through. If it will, I will adjust my schedule and attend it.
 - Be more sensitive in giving trainings to teachers and LGU officials highlighting diversity and uniqueness of everyone
 - Stories are indeed powerful. It inspires us to connect with one another and see how much we have in common. When we share, we are able to co-create solutions, the most innovative ones to answer a great need in our

society. This is the beauty of being inclusive—When we go beyond so we can love, support and finally accept our differences as we can provide access to quality education for everyone. I fully commit to be a teacher and facilitate who will be a champion for inclusive education and the rights of our marginalized learners in remote areas.

- Delivering learning opportunities to diverse early learners; start on the intensive implementation of the differentiation of instruction among learners of Sogod Central Elementary School in Cebu Province Division.
- Be mindful of the practice of inclusivity in my day-to-day interactions with people.
- Actively engage with different stakeholders and share responsibility for developing and strengthening inclusive education in the community.
- Repackage research and development products and activities of SEAMEO INNOTECH to be more inclusive in content and delivery
- To continue to work, serve and stay in my school
- As a school manager and leader, I would be one of the vanguards of policies promoting inclusive education
- Allocate at least one hour a day to think, plan and engage personally in actualizing what I learned from the 3-day conference at the local and national perspective
- Initiate convergence of stakeholders for inclusive education

- Given the priorities in our learning conversations, my individual action commitment is to continue my desire and passion to advocate the inclusive education. Pursuing my professional development in this area and plan to develop intervention programs for my learners with special needs.
- I will be more active in sharing what I know about inclusive education not only to my education students in college but also to other faculty members
- Delivering learning opportunities to diverse early learners – starting from us to make our children and our students—including those with special needs—to get quality education without exclusion. Make sure that no one is left behind.

3As in Inclusive Education

For the duration of the conference, the participants posted what has been affirmed, altered, and added to their concept of inclusive education on the 3As Wall.

AFFIRMED

- Inclusive education means no limitations and transcends physical disability
- We can find the way to do things when we have dreams
- Education is inclusive; education is for all
- I have a very good experience during the conference. We must all act for inclusive education.
- Thriving people will always have ambition, passion, and growth mindset, even if they had physical or financial limitations.
- Inclusive education will be achieved if stakeholders have the same vision and will work together with passion and sincere intentions
- Acceptance and respect are crucial to inclusive education
- Four Pillars of Inclusive Education, especially in the Philippine context
- Implementation of inclusive education requires varying needs, knowledge, attitude and facilities.
- Let us grow like grasses, let us bloom like flowers
- Changing mindset is important in inclusive education
- ALS is a strategy to inclusive education
- Quality education is for all

AFFIRMED

- Exchange of experience
- Inclusive education is EFA
- I agree about the idea and concern in inclusive education. We should make child-friendly schools that humanize people, take care of the poor, and protect women
- Education is everybody's business; parents' role is critical
- Education without errors, problems, and challenges.
- There is a need to globalize skills in inclusive education
- We always have a choice. Our choices can make or break our organization.
- This seminar is loaded with information. Inclusive education is for all
- Change begins with me
- I agree to make a better community where everyone is accepted. It means we are all the same human beings
- Affirming that education is an opportunity to learn across all walks of life. Engage and be educated.
- Education is giving children opportunities to make their own choice—which they can only make when they have a clear vision about their context and the world

ADDED

- Concrete understanding and appreciation of how marginalized people can be empowered and can make an impact in the society.
- Storytelling from successful people to motivate each other, e.g., street barkers, teachers etc.
- I got more knowledge in education; I must contribute to improve education
- Guide the researcher to find the key problem and look for the best way to solve the problem
- Quality education for all
- Empower the excluded by engaging them in dialogue towards action
- Advocate inclusive education to cope with global competitiveness—not just education but quality education for all
- No one should be left behind
- We should accept all students without boundaries
- We should make educators comfortable in discussing sexual education with primary school children
- The measures in inclusive education include lower percentage of bullying incidents; set indicators include parents', students' and teachers' ideas
- Inclusive education is possible if all components and stakeholders are engaged in its various programs.
- Improve facilities that promote inclusive education in school
- There is always a special room for learners with special needs. We are all responsible and accountable with one another.
- Gender equality and equity; up to the context of the country

ADDED

- Inclusion beyond SPED, PWD, norms into acknowledging hidden types needing inclusion
- Start early with social and emotional learning
- ERF 4 Pillars of Balanced and Inclusive Education
- Policies are good but changing practices is best

ALTERED

- Be more open-minded; give feedback for programs
- Inclusive education is not only for the marginalized
- Sense of priority regarding inclusion policies and theories
- Everyone has special skills and talents even if s/he has special needs.
- My perception is that Sec. Briones is the typical formal secretary—she is not. She has such wonderful and relatable stories to tell
- The leader should have an open mind
- Quality education is for all
- Don't give up on difficult things.
- Stakeholders' engagement is a responsibility of everyone in the department. Everyone has the power to engage stakeholders.
- Inclusive education is not equal to SPED
- Use of full phrases instead of acronyms (e.g., PWD = People with Disabilities; rephrasing SPED to learners with special needs)
- We are all learners
- Quality education is very important

“

GRAPHIC
DOCUMENTATION

”

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION RE-IMAGINED

6-8 MARCH 2018

HOW DO WE
GROW A LEARN-
ING COMMUNITY
THAT WELCOMES
EVERYONE?



EDUCATION is a **FUNDAMENTAL**
as well as an **ENABLING**
RIGHT!

DR. RAMON BACANI
Director, SEAMEO



EDUCATION SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE
TO ALL! AND NOT JUST EDUCATION —
QUALITY EDUCATION!

SEC. LEONOR MAGTOLIS BRIONES
Department of Education



4 PILLARS OF BALANCED + INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



INTRA-
NATURALISM



TRANS-
DIVERSITY



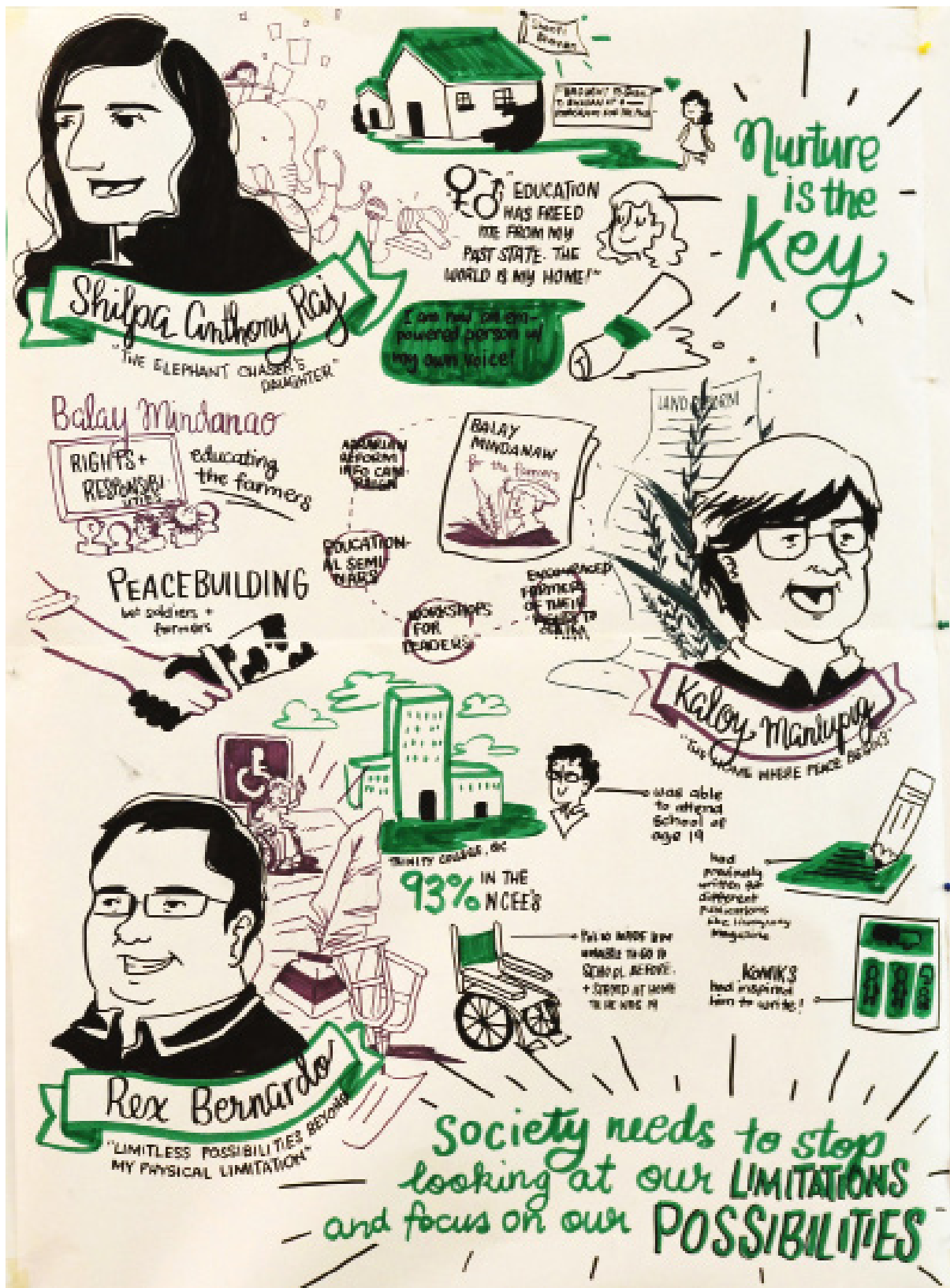
DIALECTICISM



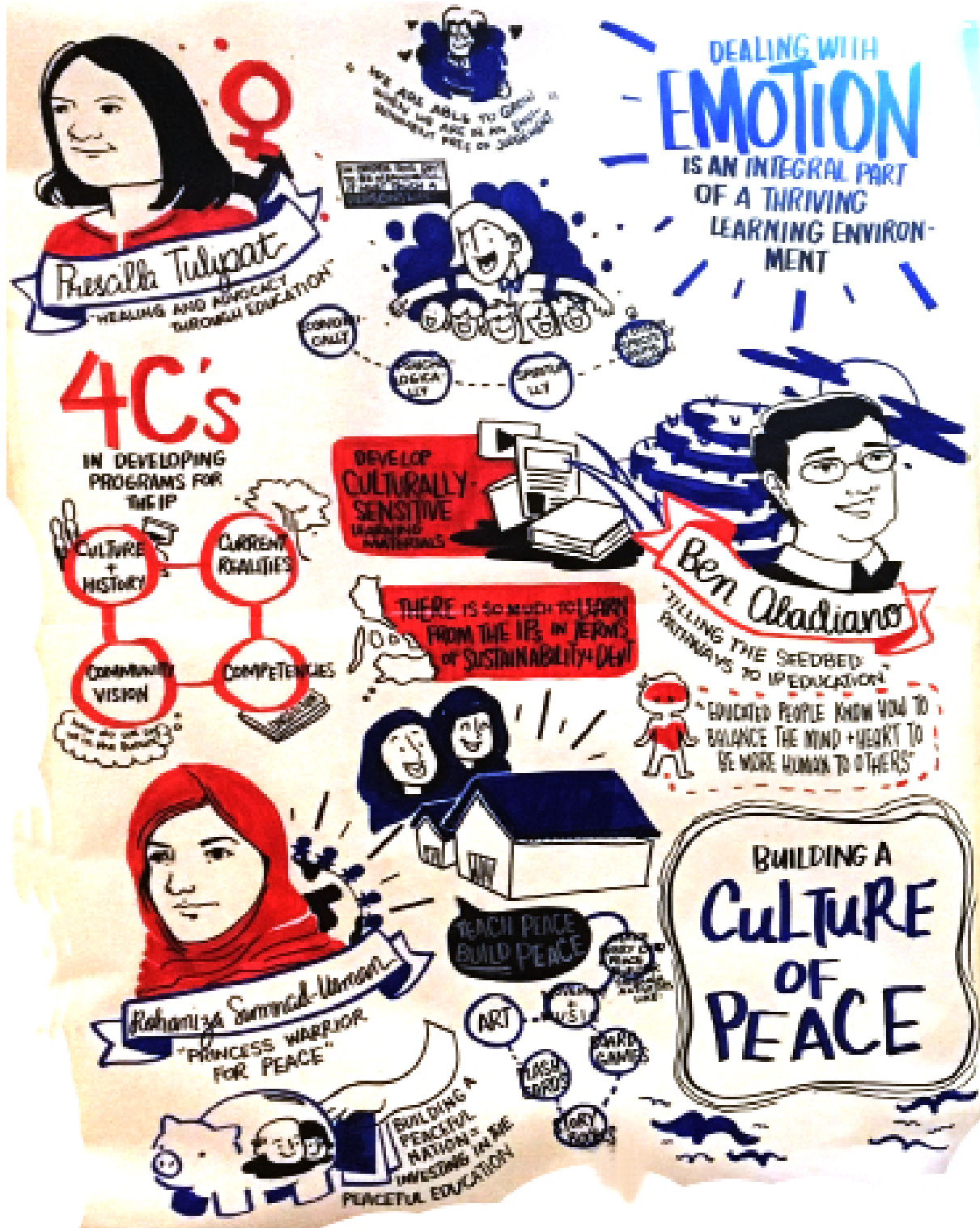
CONTEXTUALITY

SHEIKH MANSSOUR
BIN MUSSALLAM
President, ERF













SIMPLICITY IS POWER!

 SIMPLIFY YOUR LANGUAGE TO REACH A WIDER AUDIENCE

- 1. THINK LIKE A FOOT
- 2. DESCRIBE YOUR WORD
 - [WHAT IS IT? WHAT DOES IT DO?]
 - [FEEL OR FEELING TO THAT WORD?]
- 3. USE THIS IN A SENTENCE TO DEFINE YOUR WORD
- 4. USE THE WORD ADJECTIVE AND SIMPLIFY!

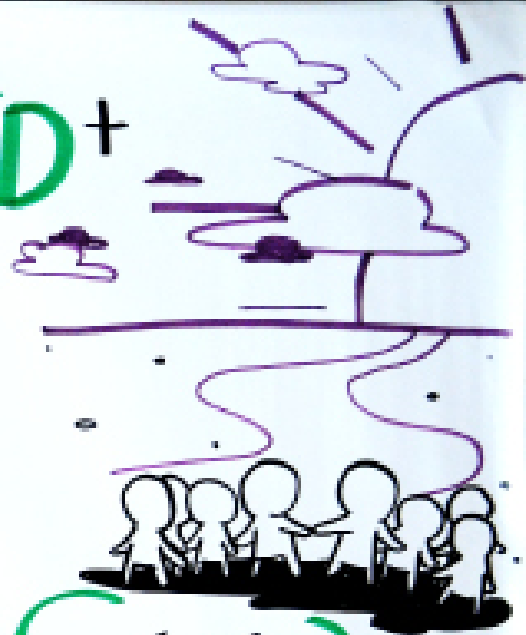


#InclusiveNarratives

4 PILLARS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



A BALANCED + INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MEANS LEARNING AND GROWING TOGETHER



“

STORIES OF
INCLUSION

”



PHOTO FROM BEN ABADIANO

“

My life and work is a testimony of my great love for the Mangyan people of Mindoro, the Lumads and the Muslims of Mindanao.

”

Tilling the Seedbed: Co-creating Pathways to IP Education

Benjamin Abadiano

“My life and work is a testimony of my great love for the Mangyan people of Mindoro, the Lumads and the Muslims of Mindanao. Greater still, I am here before you today as a witness to the kind of love I have received from them, our indigenous peoples, and Muslim brothers and sisters.”

I spent 19 days to stay and live with the indigenous people (IP). With them, I had my firsthand discovery of a different dimension in my spiritual life, something I have never experienced before. It was a short period, really. But those 19 days have changed my life.

I was in second year college when I first encountered the Manobo people in Bukidnon, Mindanao. There, I was humbled and deeply struck by the simplicity of the Manobo's way of life. They were materially poor. They live in houses with floors made of pieces of wood tied together. They had nothing else inside except a kaserola (metal pot) for cooking and an itak (bolo). Yet, they were so generous, and willing to share what they have. I saw how they live and practice Christian values in a way I have not seen before, without even knowing or talking about them. After my stay with them, I returned to the city with a changed heart. I decided to let go of the material things

I valued most, keeping only a few pieces of clothes and a pair of slippers, so I can live a life without trappings. Just like the Manobos, I began to live a simple life.

I grew up in Maigo, Lanao del Norte, where my grandparents brought me up. Even though I do not know exactly who my parents are, the love and values of my grandparents shaped the person I am now today and all the things I have been doing. It was the wise words of my grandfather that have stayed with me for the longest time: to grow up fulfilled and content in life. So my growing up years, my days with the Manobo people, and my grandfather's words have guided me all along to the life I have chosen. At 21 years old I decided to offer my life to my country's katutubo, the indigenous people (IP).

I started to travel across the country, visiting every IP groups. It became a spiritual journey. In the final leg of my journey in 1988, at 25, I went to Paitan, Mindoro Oriental. I volunteered among the missionary sisters of Servants of the Holy Spirit, who have been doing mission work among the Mangyan-Alangan people. I stayed with them for nine years. Sr. Victricia Pascassio, who later became my mentor, asked me to focus on the community's basic needs and I proposed a program on literacy.

I first started this school with only 12 students, teaching them inside a small hut where I also stayed. I became both as a teacher and a principal. I raised funds from my friends in Manila to run the school. Over the years, the effort I initiated has gradually evolved. We built classrooms, meeting halls, a library, a science laboratory, a preschool and a Mangyan cultural center.

Today, this is the Tugdaan Center for Human and Environmental Development. Here is the school shaped by the Mangyan people's dream. Tugdaan is an Alangan Mangyan word which means "seedbed", as this school is the seedbed of the community's efforts and aspirations. It now trains nearly 200 students of all ages, and half of its teachers are Mangyans. I encourage them to speak their language and wear their native clothing. Along the way, I studied their language, which led me to compile the words, and finished a Tagalog-Mangyan dictionary.

The foundation of Tugdaan lies in its sensitivity to the dynamics of the Mangyan culture. The work it has revolves around research, documentation, and regular community consultation. All these have helped us integrate the Mangyan people's various cultural values and traditions into Tugdaan's program philosophy, structures, methodologies, and activities. Working with the Mangyans have empowered them more to use their own visions and perspectives in life and use their capabilities. There is also a living spirit of volunteerism and social service in the program. Christian virtues and Mangyan social norms both inspire strong value formation among students, as they are encouraged more to bring back their services and acquired knowledge for the benefit of their own people. Also, these works have been replicated even at other far-flung communities.

Mangyan-Alangan people are one of the subgroups of Mangyans in Mindoro. I have learned so much from them, in the way they view life, the self, and the world. I have felt with them their struggles on surviving every day, and the longing for self-determination. I have heard their stories, their realities, their obstacles, and the perils they face on protecting their ancestral lands, culture, and way of life.

The success of Tugdaan led the Department of Education (DepEd, formerly DECS) to formally recognize its basic education program. After four years, it was awarded as the country's outstanding literacy program. It became the school the Mangyan-Alangan people dreamed it to be, run by their community leaders as an educational institution.

Along the way, I thought that the entire work was so overwhelming. But the work was rather so simple, I later realized. At first, I had the hard time gaining their trust. The IP leaders once questioned my sincerity. I could not blame them, for they had negative experiences with other groups reaching out to them. But along the way, they have seen the consistency of my words and actions. They began to trust and love me as one of them. Such is the love that I learned from them. To lead people, truly, is to share with their lives and hold their aspirations as my own. It's not what I can achieve, but how I can touch them through simple but loving ways of service.

Then time came when I thought of returning to the path of priesthood, of becoming a Jesuit. I thought that was it. In 1997, after nine years, I left Tugdaan assured, knowing that the people I have helped are independent, skilled, and self-reliant. I went back to the seminary, but after a while I felt bored. Though I knew then priesthood was a wonderful vocation, I felt it's not really for me. I deeply owe to the Jesuits my formation and the value of service, which I believe have shaped my personal mission. Still, I longed for experiencing spirituality more outside the seminary. I could practice more deeply when I'm out there. I'm more alive!

When I got out, I looked for opportunities where I could serve more, and not necessarily getting a job. In 2001, the Assisi Development Foundation started their efforts in Mindanao, to help its people rebuild their lives torn by civil wars. I met Ambassador Howard Dee, who also later mentored me in this work. I became the executive director of its program called Tabang Mindanaw. Since peacebuilding effort is central to this, we integrated aspects of social welfare, governance, and livelihood to make the program relevant to the lives of the people. I coordinated with the people involved: military, local authorities, clergy, armed insurgents, and most importantly with the locals themselves. I got in touch more with the Lumad, the indigenous peoples of Mindanao. I also worked with Muslim communities. Together, we founded the Ilawan Center for Peace and Sustainable Development. In Filipino, ilawan means "light-holder" or "center of light". It became a center for culture-based education, similar on how Tugdaan was built.

In 2005, I had a chance meeting with Julieta Ortiz, then president of the University of Southeastern Philippines (USEP) in Davao. Over lunch, we came up with a new idea—setting up a college for the IPs, to help IP youth develop leadership and competence. The next year, we founded the Pamulaan Center, the first of its kind, an institution solely dedicated to IP education. It offers full-degree programs, which are all aligned to the indigenous needs: BA in Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development, BS in Indigenous People’s Education, BA in Peace Building and Multicultural studies and BS in Indigenous Agriculture. Pamulaan is a Lumad-Matigsalog word, which also means “seedbed”, as it follows the meaningful legacy of Tugdaan. Linking it to my experiences with the Mangyan people, I adopted the Tugdaan Center’s symbol of a young plant with strong roots planted in a seedbed as the emblem of the new Center. And over time, Pamulaan has always been true to its intention of providing an intensive community-service learning program to truly prepare its graduates in helping the IP communities.

The crucial key in my work is listening to the IPs. I just listened to their dreams and aspirations. Listening to them has guided me on what steps to take. That’s why I have always put strong emphasis on the importance of genuine empathy in my work. IPs may be materially poor, but they are culturally rich and proud. I have learned not to impose my agenda on them. I have learned not to step on their toes. I’m not here to profit, but to serve the needs of their community. I don’t make promise of success to them. To me, success is about them, how they see it, and not mine, because it’s their vision I’m working for. I’m always faithful and confident that through this work, God always provides.

It is now 2018, and if I have a choice, I would rather stay with the IP communities. Yet I am happy to know that there are now so many IP youth leaders emerging, both from Pamulaan and Tugdaan. Knowing this, I have already multiplied myself through them. With their strong community service formation, IP leaders are now able to integrate their communities with government and non-government institutions. This integration gives the IP communities their voice. Today, while in Manila, I am mobilizing resources among my friends and organization who have come to trust in the work I have done for the IP communities. It’s not enough to educate the IPs, we must also provide them the opportunities to create sustainable development mechanisms on culture-sensitive social enterprises and development for them to truly thrive.

I became the chair of Assisi after five years of working with them. Later, I was blessed to receive the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Emergent Leadership in 2004. But to receive this award is not my honor, but it is for the people I have always served. This is for them: the Mangyan Alangans, the Lumads, the Muslims, and every IP in the country. I deeply thank them all. They have affirmed that a life truly worth living is a life dedicated to others. In being loved and cared for, I have learned the love that serves.



PHOTO FROM IRENE BARZAGA

“

Whether you are teaching young students or prisoners, always teach with a heart. It makes all the difference.

”

A Teacher in Prison

Irene Barzaga

As a child I would play “teacher-teacheran.” That’s what I love to play when I was a child. A make-believe teacher. While growing up in the province, I looked up high to teachers. My aunts were teachers in Manila. Every time they would visit us, I would look at them in awe and say “Gusto ko rin ng ganyang buhay.” (I want that kind of life)

It was by accident when I entered the Alternative Learning System (ALS). I majored in Industrial Education, but early in my career I received a training as ALS instructional manager. I was the youngest in our group then. I just thought of getting some work experience through ALS. This was in 2002. But when I started meeting the ALS students, my perspective changed. I felt I was needed there. I realized the value of what I was doing to them. I realized I could give hope. So I decided to stay. In 2004, I got the position as a mobile teacher. After 6 months, I was assigned at the Quezon City Jail.

As a mobile teacher, I go and teach where I am needed. So when I was first assigned to prison, I went there to teach. I took the adventure. And all of my students are prisoners. I never felt afraid. I treat them just like an average neighbor or a newfound friend, without having any label or presumptions about them and their past. I think of them as my tropa, (my buddies), and I interact with them.

For 6 months we studied together. I found them very cooperative. I taught them the basics on reading writing, and they all studied with the intention of graduating. Eventually, 13 of my 30 students graduated from ALS. In the outside world, graduating from school is so ordinary. But in prison, every graduate is a major achievement. It was my achievement, too. And yet, even for those who did not graduate, I think graduation matters less than to see them transformed individuals after ALS. That for me is also an achievement.

But I think my greatest accomplishments as an ALS teacher can only be told through the stories of my learners. Every prisoner-learner has a story and I am given the opportunity as an ALS teacher to be part of those stories.

My prisoner students would tell me that before studying at ALS, they would just hang out engaging in mindless talk, gossip, bragging, or worse, violent brawls and riots. They spent their days with nothing better to do. But with ALS, they now have something to look forward to each day, something meaningful to do for themselves.

ALS gives the prisoners a sense of dignity. I would ask them to write an essay about their dream. One wrote he wanted to be a barangay tanod (peace keeping and security officer in a village) to help the community. It sounds so simple, but to prisoners it is a big deal. It is always every prisoner's dream to become a productive member of the society.

I have another learner whose relatives never visited him. But for his graduation, we went out of our way to invite his grandmother to do the honor of putting on his medal. Finally, he graduated from elementary.

Another learner hid from his family the truth about his being imprisoned. The parents didn't know, except his brother. Because of that, nobody visited him. With no family to support him, ALS became his family. ALS saved him from boredom and thoughts of killing himself.

Some prisoners studied in college before being jailed. ALS has become a way for them to teach their fellow inmates. They have become teaching assistant, and this gives them a sense of accomplishment and pride.

Some of my learners are now working abroad. They would sometimes email me just to thank me. They would say, "Ma'am, salamat pinagtiyagaan mo ko." (Thank you for not being patient with us.)

When I started as a young mobile teacher, I remember being aggressive. I wanted so much to share what I know and to give everything to the learners. After many years, I have realized that nothing has so much changed. All the negative experiences are overshadowed by the positive ones; and these are the stories of my learners.

Now, when I get my salary, I think of my learners. I would buy food for them just so I could give them something. Again, it sounds so common. But in prison, learners appreciate this a lot.

I would attend training or volunteer somewhere or serve as a resource speaker so I can continuously improve myself. My dream is to further expand and help ALS perhaps through the use of technology such as web conferencing.

Today, aside from teaching in prison, I'm also teaching in elementary school, and currently practices SPED. I also serve as coordinator for District 3 and 5 of the Division of City Schools in Quezon City.

I'm a teacher but I don't mind being in prison. I have taught inside the prison cell for 10 years now. Inside the prison cell, I found freedom. I have learned to know myself more, that I judge people less, especially those I teach in prison. Over the years, I have become a creative and innovative teacher. In my own little way, I give my ALS learners this sense of freedom to hope more and dream more.

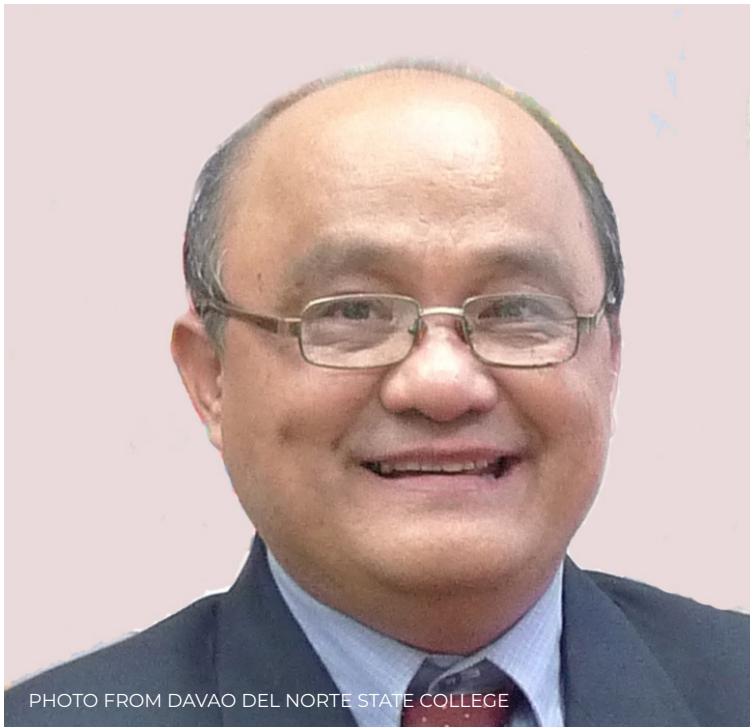


PHOTO FROM DAVAO DEL NORTE STATE COLLEGE

“

I may not be a doctor that I wished to be, but to be a teacher is also to cure—cure the challenges of being uneducated and help more people, especially the IPs, to reach a place and dream, just as I did.

”

I Wanted to be a Doctor, But Teaching is Better

Jonathan Bayogan

I once wished to become a doctor, but I have become a teacher instead.

I am a Kankanaey, and I was raised by farmers in Northern Cordillera. I was born in Mankayan, Benguet, but grew up in Tadian, Mountain Province. I once dreamed to become a medical doctor, but instead I found myself in Mindanao, as a president of a state college. How this happened is my interesting story.

Perhaps we never are aware that most indigenous people suffer so much poverty. Cordillera was among the poorest regions in the country. My people are just among the diverse groups in this region. Tingguian, Isneg Bontoc, Sagada, and Ifugao, are all in the north while Kalinga, Ibaloi, and us Kankanaey are in the South. Like many IPs, my people lack the opportunities to study in a good school. Despite this, I dreamt of a better future. So when my uncle, who was working as a houseboy for Justice Moreno, invited me to Manila, I took the chance. I had the chance to study further, and passed the entrance exams at the Philippines Science High School.

I was one of the only two Cordillerans who were able to get a good chance to study better. I even had the chance to use the Marcos era pre-fabricated classrooms. I'm proud to be one of its first users. After high school, I enrolled

in UP Baguio and took up BS Zoology. I was intending to pursue either a Mining Engineer or a Doctor of Medicine. At the same time, I also took the then National Science Board Exam (NSDB) and passed it. Then I decided to study at the Philippine Normal College (PNC) and dropped out from UP Baguio. While I wanted to finish his BS Zoology, I believed NSDB scholarship in PNC would be less burdensome for my parent's very limited funds.

I was already in my third year at PNC when I stepped up and recognized as a student leader. When Martial Law was declared, I became responsible in organizing special lectures of noted Philippine scientist and experts at the time. But, unlike the other student leaders in Manila during the First Quarter Storm, I preferred to stay behind the frontlines. I continued my studies and eventually finished my Bachelor's degree in Physics Teaching.

Though I got so many opportunities to teach in Manila, I went back to the Cordilleras, and taught at Benguet State University for 19 years. After my teaching career in the North, I got an offer to teach at the University of Southeastern Philippines in Davao City. I took it and taught for the next for 10 years. We considered moving to Mindanao, since my wife also got to teach in the region, while our kids can study in a good school. And in the later years to come, I decided to apply for the presidency position at the Davao State College of Science and Technology in Mati, Davao Oriental. Later, I was appointed as the president of the Davao Del Norte State University in Panabo City.

I never thought of becoming an academic executive. But I strive in my work as an educator to focus on the higher educations of IPs. I dream that someday that IP people may find their calling through education. Education is indeed a great equalizer. I may not be a doctor I wished to be, but to be a teacher and to teach is also to cure—to cure the challenges of being uneducated, and help more people, especially the IPs, to reach a place and dream, just as I did.



PHOTO FROM REX BERNARDO

“

My work is a testimony of my perseverance, passion for learning, and mission to promote inclusive education that cannot be crippled by my condition.

”

Limitless Possibilities beyond My Physical Limitations

Rex Bernardo

Twenty-eight years ago, I felt freedom. I was nineteen then. My parents finally allowed and supported me to go to school. For the first time, I broke free to pursue my dream of studying in school.

But before this happened, my parents never sent me to school. They just kept me at home, because of my condition—I was five when I got sick of poliomyelitis. I lost my ability to walk and unable to use my right arm. I should have gone to kindergarten, but because of my condition, I was not able to study. My five siblings, meanwhile, went to school.

While at home, I still learned things. At seven, I started to love reading. My aunt, a Grade 1 teacher, patiently taught me how to read and write. I read a lot. I got books from my siblings, while I got newspapers and magazines from my father. Aside from reading books, I listened to radio drama—my daily and constant companion.

One day, a cousin who worked in a publishing house brought us boxes of old comic books. This sparked my interest in writing. At 15, I began learning how to write scripts for comic books. Without any formal training, I persevered and self-studied scriptwriting. I started sending comic book scripts to different

publishing houses. After two years and 72 rejection letters from irate editors, one of my scripts was finally published. This opportunity allowed me to gain my confidence in writing. Consequently, my fiction stories were published in a leading local magazine in the 90's. Later, the local magazine featured me as one of its most promising young writers, without the editors knowing that I never had formal training as a writer.

I told myself then that I can make something better with my life. That having the perseverance, passion for learning, and faith in God, the possibility of accomplishing great things in life is limitless even with my physical limitations. At 19, I decided to write a six-page typewritten letter for my parents to ask them to send me to school. There I wrote all my dreams and aspirations. I remember keeping the letter for three days before I was able to muster the courage to give it to my mother. It was before bed time and I asked her to bring the letter with her to the bedroom so my father could read it with her.

I anxiously waited for their response, knowing that whatever decision they make will have a huge impact on my future. I vividly recall the moment when my parents came to see me after half an hour. They were both in tears. They hugged me tightly, telling me how sorry they were for all the years they had kept me in the confines of our home. I cried, too, as I felt how much my parents loved me. My parents recognized how determined I was. They finally allowed and supported me to go to school for the first time. It was the happiest day of my life.

We soon began taking actions to achieve my dreams. I took the National College Entrance Examination, and I got a rating of 93%. This allowed me to study in college and take up BS Psychology.

Since I did not go through the usual path of basic education, I admit it was not an easy task to master lessons I had to learn in various learning areas. Since I had been kept at home for most of my life, it was harder for me to adjust to school life and to start living by myself away from home for the first time. But the supportive learning environment at the Trinity University of Asia (formerly Trinity College of Quezon City) where I studied helped me adjust well into college life. The university helped me develop and nurture the inner leader in me. I transformed from a shy, person-with-disability (PWD) probinsyano (someone who grew up in the province) in my first year in campus to a PWD advocate and a campus leader in my fourth year in college.

I became an active school leader and established the university's first organization for learners with disability. I was also a founding member of the Alyansa ng May Kapansanan sa Pilipinas (Alliance of People with Disabilities in the Philippines). I went on to earning three master's degrees and a doctoral degree from local and international institutions through scholarship grants.

After traveling and studying, I returned home to serve the people in my hometown, Daet, Camarines Norte. Today, I teach here as a college professor. I also devoted time to support Gawad Kalinga (a Philippine-based movement that aims to build communities to help end poverty) in my province. In 2008, I received the Apolinario Mabini Presidential Award presented by then Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. I was also presented with the Gerry Roxas Medal of Excellence, making me the first person on wheelchair to receive the recognition as one of The Outstanding Young Men.

I believe that my experiences put me in a unique position to advocate for inclusive education. I draw lessons from my past as someone who was deprived of education. My present engagement in the academe continues to equip me with knowledge about cultures and traditions in the education sector that can go for or against inclusion of people with disabilities. Being a leader in various PWD organizations aligns me with the desires and aspirations of fellow persons with disabilities to be given equal opportunity. Now, I am actively supporting the Philippine Network for Inclusive Education (PNIE) and serve as a National Disability Adviser working for the creation and implementation of relevant legislations and policies on inclusive education in the Philippines.

With the help of the network, I envision a learning environment where all learners, including children with disabilities, learn together in an atmosphere of acceptance, respect and togetherness; where educators are equipped with right tools and supported by the school and community in teaching and facilitating learning for all. The network aims to remove barriers to education faced by children with disabilities, including physical mobility, communication and attitudinal barriers, by advocating for comprehensive legislation and policies that will foster inclusive education.

I hope this legislation ensures access and availability of inclusive education for PWDs by providing necessary resources, measures and adaptations within schools to accommodate different needs. The legislation also enforces measures to eliminate segregation between and within schools and classrooms.

It is also important to work with parents of PWD and find ways to support them so they can support their children's access to education. When my parents decided not to send me to school, I never felt that it was because they did not love me. It was because they did not know how to support me. They were not equipped with information on how to best support my needs.

Finally, we need to build inclusive cultures in schools and create inclusive learning environments, in which children learn together, and which enable children with disabilities to acquire the core academic curriculum and basic cognitive skills, together with essential life skills.

It is my hope that with the support of PNIE, relevant and meaningful legislations and policies will be put in place. These must include a comprehensive Inclusive Education Act that encompasses all government line agencies working in the field of education; ordinances and support from local government units allocating resources for implementing inclusive education; and a strong support from the country's leadership to promote inclusive education.

As I look back at my younger self, who was unschooled at age 20, I have realized I was like many people with disabilities in the Philippines who have to endure the ridicule and insults of those who don't believe in what I can do and contribute to our society. With the journey I had, I never expected to receive prestigious recognitions. All these have come as a bonus. But I continue to use these recognitions as a motivation and a reminder that I have a duty to help my country in whatever way I can. My work is a testimony of my perseverance, passion for learning, and mission to promote inclusive education that cannot be crippled by my condition.



PHOTO FROM FR. BOBBY DELA CRUZ

“

These drug dependents are not ordinary students or learners. These are wounded people who need to trust in their God, in their kapwa, and in themselves again.

”

Getting High on God and Life

Fr. Bobby dela Cruz

I am Father Bobby dela Cruz, a Catholic priest. I am the youngest among seven siblings. One could say that our family places a high premium on education. My siblings are all professionals; they have earned their master's degrees. One is an architect; another a UP teacher. But I was different. I stood out for what I have accomplished in a family of achievers.

And here's what I had become: A drug pusher. A drug dependent.

I was never into formal school. I was simply winging it all throughout elementary, high school, and college. But I was a survivor. I survived on my family's wealth. I survived by cheating in exams and copying my classmates' answers. I survived by selling drugs. I survived by getting addicted on drugs.

I never cared much about studying and getting a degree. I never cared if I went in and out of jail. All I cared about was getting powerful and having lots of money. I wanted to learn, but only on how to survive and how to get rich. I heard of many stories about people who never went to school but still went on to succeed in life. So, I thought, how can finishing one's studies guarantee you the attainment of your dreams? To my young mind, all one

needs is to become “madiskarte” (street smart). I was surviving anyway, and I was earning money. I was doing “well” even if I was not learning within the formal system. That’s how I thought back then.

My drug dependence all started as an adventure. In high school, I experimented on marijuana, and sold some to others. I was cool. I had money. I can buy alcohol. I was in an all-boys school, and I felt macho. When I got into college in 1984, I replaced marijuana with shabu. I also sold mogadon, a downer which my former classmate supplied me with. I grew less and less interested in my studies. Also, I was not going to church anymore. For ten years, I was in and out of prison and rehabilitation programs. My name appeared on newspapers. Our house was sold after it got raided by the police. There was no one left who loved me except my mother. My life was one big mess.

I was resigned to what my life has become at that point. I would just continue what I have been used to doing—illegal drugs, criminal work, prison time. I might not be happy, but then again, I was surviving, and I had money. I was clearly down in the dumps though. I had nowhere to go but up.

It was when I visited a church and chanced upon an invitation for an evangelization session, that things turned around for me. I listened intently to the message, and I was deeply moved. Slowly I realized that I may be a Catholic, but I knew close to nothing about my religion and my faith. That admission that I knew nothing was critical. I suddenly felt like a man with a deep, insatiable hunger. I was like a sponge, taking it all in and learning from people of faith. It was then that I realized I wanted to learn more. For me, that opportunity to listen and learn was like a pin of light at the end of the tunnel. It was a small opening but an opening nonetheless. I decided then that I would stop taking drugs and throw away all the drug-related paraphernalia I possess.

After a few months of evangelization sessions, I accepted the invitation to become part of a lay community known as the Neocatechumenal Way, a post-baptismal catechumenate. Within this community, we celebrated the Word of God. This community supported me throughout my learning journey and challenges. The people here were my backbone. They understood me and stood by me. We learned from each other and corrected one another. They hired teachers to guide us. This community was, in no uncertain terms, an important part of who I have become today.

Increasingly, with their help, my resolve to learn grew even more. I needed to not just enhance my life further but to change others’ lives as well. I wanted to serve God. But how can I serve and help others and God if I do not know much? I needed to learn and gain more knowledge. At first, I had some reservations because I felt I no longer had the ability to study. But I had an inexplicable drive within me.

In 1997, an invitation came to me to attend the World Youth Day in Paris, France. I wanted to be part of the event but my pending cases in court prevented me from leaving the country. By some stroke of luck, three days before World Youth Day, I got a call from the court informing me that my cases were dropped for lack of evidence. It was nothing short of a miracle, and a clear sign that God's grace was at work.

While I was in Paris, our community announced a call for priesthood. Initially, I had no plans of becoming a priest. But the doors to priesthood kept on opening, even before Paris, so I relented and gave in to the call. The catch was that I had to study Philosophy and Theology. To prepare for this, I underwent tutorial lessons and re-learned even the most basic stuff. All those practice tests that I completed paid off and I passed the admission test for the Philosophy program in Christ the King seminary. However, studying again was a real struggle for me. For a person who survived school by cheating exams and copying classmates' answers, studying with seriousness and diligence was a totally challenging task. During all these, I prayed to God for strength and guidance.

When I finished Philosophy, I went back to my alma mater, the University of Santo Tomas (UST), to study Theology. By this time, my motivation was high and I was really engaged in my studying. I eventually graduated cum laude from the university, something that I never thought I would accomplish in my life.

In all these, I listened. I learned. I obeyed. And I became wise. I realized that it does take humility to learn. I admit that I didn't know much at the outset, but I was willing to learn. I wanted to learn because I needed to impart something to other people. Presently, I am in the process of sharing what I have gained through the years.

This calling came into sharper focus when in July 2016, upon Rodrigo Duterte's assumption of the presidency, I was requested by Caritas Manila to head the "Sanlakbay para sa Pagbabagong Buhay" program for drug surrenderees. It was a response of the Catholic Church to the large turnout of drug addicts who surrendered themselves as a result of the government's "war on drugs."

Sanlakbay is a community-based rehabilitation program that encourages drug dependents to surrender, undergo rehabilitation, and give themselves another chance to start anew. Established in collaboration with the parishes, government, communities, families and other stakeholders, the program includes three parts: psycho-spiritual formation, values formation, and "gabay" or counseling sessions. It is supplemented by 12 modules that allow the participants to undergo counseling, spiritual formation, skills formation training, livelihood projects, arts and cultural program, and sports activities

for their holistic development. These modules, though, are works in progress, and need to be finalized soon in order for the capability-building of volunteer-facilitators at the parish level, to go full speed.

Expanding the program from one to 16 parishes on the backs of volunteers and a few paid staff was no mean feat. It has needed passion, commitment, and collaboration with many groups and individuals. Our strong faith has also brought us to where we are right now. Despite the many limitations and challenges, the program continues to grow stronger and to scale up.

Our program acts like a blood transfusion for these drug dependents. We are providing them with information, skills, and spiritual renewal that they need to be whole again. But In order to effectively give these, we need them to trust us. And to get that trust, they need to be able to perceive that we are willing to risk our lives for them. These drug dependents are not ordinary students or learners. These are wounded people who need to trust in their God, in their kapwa (fellowman), and in themselves again. It is not an easy task by any standards. But I am a living testament that even the most seemingly impossible can become possible with God.



PHOTO FROM LYNETTE DELA CRUZ-TUPAS

“

Reading and writing can be learned, but love and passion spell the difference.

”

Mothers Make the Best Teachers

Lynette dela Cruz-Tupas

Back when I was a student at the University of the Philippines, my teacher asked us, “can the poor help themselves?” That question stuck with me throughout my adult years, but the answer came much later as I began working with the undocumented migrants of Sabah.

My husband and I are missionaries, and we have always been passionate about helping the disenfranchised members of our community. In 2008, we had the unique opportunity to visit Sabah at the request of our Singaporean friend. There, we witnessed the difficulties of third-generation Filipino children whose lineage can be traced back to Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga. Because of the lack of opportunities in the country, many Muslim-Filipinos travel to Sabah in search of work. Some of them are displaced by the war in Mindanao.

When my husband and I first came to Sabah, we were brought to one of the Kampongs (villages) where we were shyly received by a group of mothers who had patiently waited for our arrival. The group immediately mistook us for teachers since our Singaporean friend had promised to bring them one. I learned that most of the Filipino adults living in Kampongs have not gone

past the sixth grade. Many of them could speak Bahasa fluently but could not read nor write. Their children who have grown up in the Kampong all their lives are similarly disadvantaged.

Our two-week exposure in the community opened our eyes to the plight of the undocumented immigrants who were hounded day and night by the Malaysian police. The documented and undocumented ones got to live in city centers and palm oil plantations. The latter mostly settled in coasts, forests and hinterlands of Sabah to avoid deportation. Every day was a constant struggle for survival. The men toiled in plantation and construction and would earn an average of 200 to 400 pesos a day. The women would do odd jobs for 200 pesos a day. Since they could not read nor write, the children were stuck working the same jobs as their parents.

Seeing the desire of the parents for their children to be educated, we asked them what they think should be done, and how would be the best way to do it. The idea of a learning center was created for mothers to educate their own children. The mothers talked about what they wanted their children to learn. Simple and practical lessons on reading, writing, and computation would be most useful for them. We looked for mothers who were able to read and write and trained them to teach their children. We never outdid the passion and love of these mothers for their children. In the middle of our first year, with over a hundred children and teenagers enrolled, our first batch of teenage teachers was born. At first, we had four teenagers who assisted the mothers as they were teaching. At the start of our second year, the teenagers started new learning centers in other Kampongs and hiding places which produced even more teachers from among the students and Kampong mothers. They trained more mothers, and the cycle continued. Each learning space produced teachers who started new learning spaces.

The unpredictable situations in the Kampongs prompted us to abandon the traditional curriculum in favor of a more dynamic learning system. We estimated that the children would be able to learn basic English, do computations, and teach others after one year. Many of the children had to live on their own because their parents were either relocated or deported while many more were raised by foster parents in the Kampong.

Soon, immigration laws were changed in Sabah. The children were no longer protected by the state. Like their parents, they could be brought to jail and deported. We wanted them to learn basic skills in the shortest possible time, so they could have a better stake in life. We looked for the smart ones and gave them extra lessons. Those who were able to stay longer were taught extra skills that would give them an edge for employment.

Despite the lack of proper classrooms, we never ran out of learning spaces; we taught on porches, underneath trees and houses, inside makeshift school-houses and shanties with flimsy walls serving as blackboards. Everyone was

involved in making the project a success. The children mostly sat on the floor while some brought empty sacks to sit on during class. The mothers taught their children while the fathers were hard at work constructing chairs, stools and desks for our learning spaces.

The mothers' passion and ingenuity moved us. They exuded a quiet dignity and spirit. From being plain housewives, they have risen to become pillars of their community. They were no longer just women who did odd jobs but teachers.

With the threat of deportation looming on every corner it was important for the children to be ready for the world. Building trust was vital in the early stages of the project. We remember feeling elated after a 17-year-old was able to write his name well after only a week of lessons. For someone who wasn't used to holding a pencil, it was no small feat. The mother later told us that the boy didn't write his real name. It was a test whether we could be trusted as they feared we might expose them. The more we learned about them, the better we understood the need of each community.

One time, we brought the mothers and some children to KFC. We wanted them to see life outside of their Kampong. It was a very exciting morning for them since they could order anything they wanted. Our only condition was they had to order their food in English. Fast forward to 2018, the Sabah situation has become more complex. We look back to the time our first student read aloud. The learning space was in their living area where his grandma, parents, aunts and uncles, and siblings and cousins gathered to hear. He was the first in his family to read. All the boys from this family were able to get gainful employment because they could read, compute and speak in English. The eldest now has a family of his own, and he has a good job to support them. Our teen teachers are now in college. One works as a front desk receptionist in a hotel. Every now and then we hear stories about the children who get relocated. They are still studying and teaching others.

Reading and writing can be learned, but love and passion spell the difference. When the crisis in Marawi happened last year, we learned about the hopelessness, trauma and depression that has plagued the evacuees. During our numerous visits, we shared the Sabah story to them. Last November, it was our first visit after training the mothers. The Imam said it was the first time he saw them smile again. It was also the first time that they approached us first. Their aura was totally different. They have committed themselves to the project by becoming teachers to the children. The mothers in Sabah were very happy upon knowing their experiences are no longer just their own but has moved others to dream and work for that dream. We look forward to the learning spaces and experiences these new generation of teachers will come up with.



PHOTO FROM BASIC EDUCATION SECTOR TRANSFORMATION (BEST)

“

It is not enough that just because we have disabilities, we will just stay in the house and be content there. We should go out and explore.

”

Put Me in a Regular Classroom

Sarah Jane dela Rosa

I was born with cerebral palsy. Like many children with disabilities (CWDs), this meant a whole world of struggles against discrimination and educational barriers. At the age of 24, I am still in Grade 5.

I first enrolled in a Special Education (SPED) Center at the Doña Juana Elementary School in Quezon City, Philippines. When I was moved to a regular classroom, my teacher advised me to transfer to another school because she was not trained to handle special children. I then moved to a nearby public school with no SPED Center where I began being discriminated.

I experienced being bullied by other children. They would sometimes pull my hair, spit on me, or throw stuff on my way after leaving the classroom. I realized that there were experiences in life that were more ‘disabling’ than my actual illness. I decided to quit school even if I was two months short of completing Grade 2.

I stayed at home for a few years until I was able to successfully convince my parents to send me back to Doña Juana Elementary School. Although the school is quite big with more than 7,000 pupils, I felt that I was more understood and cared for.

At Doña Juana, I have gradually made it to the top of my class. I excelled in almost all our subjects. I was once elected as class president. My classmates did not only respect me, but they also looked up to me as Ate (older sister).

Since then, I have been invited to a number of conferences and workshops to share my experiences. In one workshop – the Inclusive Education Workshop of the Department of Education (DepEd) Region 8 held in November 2016 in Baybay City, Leyte – I remember sharing with about a hundred education supervisors, school heads and teachers on how a regular classroom facilitated my learning.

I told the audience that it was only when I studied in a regular classroom that I learned to relate with people. I also learned more and faster, academically, in a regular class than in a SPED Center because I was being treated as one of them, and not one with a disability. I can do what a non-CWD person does. When I am at home, I can do my homework while helping my parents, just like other children.

Retired DepEd Director for Region 8 Dr. Luisa Bautista-Yu shared at the workshop that based on the 2010 data from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), 302,000 Filipino households have family members with disabilities, 19% of whom were below 15 years old. Dr. Yu added that being inclusive means being in one classroom. She stressed the need to mainstream CWDs into regular classes as soon as they are assessed as ready for it. Otherwise, these SPED Centers would tend to become a barrier to inclusion by perpetuating a medical model of disability.

I am happy that by sharing my experiences I am able to stir commitments from the authority to help more CWDs to have access to quality education. In Leyte, the DepEd – Division of Biliran promised to make education accessible to CWDs. The division has been working with the local government to provide stipend to volunteer SPED teachers. The division is also encouraging other partners to provide free transport for CWDs.

I believe that educators should find and encourage the CWDs who are being kept in their homes to attend school, help them grow, and develop their potentials. It is not enough that just because we have disabilities we will just stay in the house and be content there. We should go out and explore.

15th International Conference

In 2016, the Australian Government, through the Basic Education Sector Transformation (BEST), gave me the opportunity to represent the Filipino CWDs. I attended the World Conference of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Melbourne, Australia. This is in line with the Australian Government's development paradigm integrating people with disabilities in promoting prosperity, reducing poverty and enhancing stability.

Today, BEST, together with DepEd, are reviewing the existing policies in the inclusion framework to ensure compliance to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and in creating curriculum materials that support teachers to have a more inclusive practice. Support to a disability-inclusive education means schools should work towards minimizing the creation of separate pedagogy and services for CWDs.



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I was a school dropout, but it never stopped me from dreaming. I know who I am, and who we are as people. I have less money, but I am rich in knowledge. I am an Aeta. I stand tall and proud.

”

Standing tall for the Aeta Community

Carling Dumulot

I am an Aeta, and our life is in the mountains. This is the cycle of our lives: we get married, we farm, we raise a family. School was never an option, for the forest and mountains sustain us. But I am an Aeta, and I have longed to go to school.

I was five when my mother died and my adopted family took care of me. But they were never eager to allow me to study. So when a school was built in our community in the mountains, I hoped to study. Though I studied only until Grade 3, I stopped. My adopted parents told me it was time to help the family. In our culture and tradition, Aeta children are expected to help in farming. Yet even so, I still wanted to study. Like the child I was, there are Aeta children today who long to go to school. Yet Aeta parents like mine do not see the need for their children to study. They think there is no need to go to school.

Yet without enough education, we are easily deceived and exploited by lowland people. They buy our products at low prices, and sell them high in the cities. We don't have enough knowledge on how business is done in the city.

To prevent this, Aeta elders from different baranggays in Zambales came together to form Lubos Alyansang mga Katutubo ng Sambales (LAKAS).

Lakas, which in Filipino literally means “strong”, speaks what Aeta elders really wanted—to uphold our rights to ancestral domain as indigenous people, and to be self-determined and self-sufficient as one large community. The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM) supported our efforts through teaching literacy and providing health programs.

But when Mount Pinatubo erupted, everything changed.

Botolanwa, our community, was drastically devastated. We left behind every little thing we had built. Pinatubo destroyed our crops and source of living. Poverty dislocated us. We evacuated and relocated many times. We lost our livelihood. We got so poor. We felt we didn’t belong. In many occasions, lowlanders alienated and discriminated us, especially because we are uneducated. They mock us and insult us for how we appear. Our children are bullied and teased, and they became very shy and afraid of people. Aeta adults could not find decent job. It was our most difficult time.

My people’s suffering opened my eyes.

So our community elders decided to buy our own land where we can stay and live the way we always know how. With the FMM sisters’ help, we bought a parcel of land for the 155 families in our community where we could rebuild our lives and our culture.

After Pinatubo, my fellow Aeta leaders and I underwent trainings from an NGO called Education for Life (ELF). We learned about leadership, networking, and how to expand our worldview. After graduation, ELF challenged us Aeta graduates to conduct the program ourselves. Our efforts formed the Paaralang Bayan ng mga Ayta sa Zambales (PBAZ). We have become leaders training new IP leaders. Still partnering with ELF, we eventually added up alternative learning system (ALS) in this program, to teach the basics to out-of-school youth and adult Aetas.

From then on, I began to dream more for our future as a people. I dreamt of my people’s children, the Aeta children, to go on, study, and grow in our community school. I dreamt them learning and preserving our indigenous knowledge and practices. I wanted them to learn more and interact with the economic, political and cultural system of lowlanders, so they come to encounter with the right orientation.

In 2012, finally, LAKAS high school started. This school has now been a fulfillment of our dreams. Our culture has become the basis for its lessons. We partnered with DepED to formalize our school in 2015. It is the first of its kind to implement the Indigenous People’s Education Program (IPEd) . It started to teach 28 to 50 students. Now, about 179 students attend the school, mostly are Aeta children.

DepEd soon approved us Aeta elders to formally teach, despite the lack of formal schooling. It meant so much to me. I, a Grade 3 dropout, finally became a teacher in a formal school. I know it is hard to completely bring back our culture, but as teachers we can still teach our young ones the Aeta values and culture. We can still inspire in them this deep pride of being an Aeta.

Now our elders have realized the need to change and rethink our customs (among them not valuing education and early marriage) in these changing times. We should not push our children to marry early. We need to value their education above wanting them to help us in farming. We need to learn how to interact and engage with lowland communities without losing our identity and culture. We also see the need to prepare for their future and not just have “sapat”(enough for the day).

These efforts and experiences in my own community have led me to help other indigenous communities. Serving under the National Anti-Poverty Commission across three regimes, I was able to gather my resources to provide them trainings and show them how to find solutions. Many times I have been asked to represent the indigenous people of our country in conferences abroad, where I proudly share our culture and wear our clothing despite cold weather.

The Aetas are now a respected people. Our decisions are heard, and we can always make our own, without the dictates of politics or religion. Our community and culture continue to grow strong. We can engage with non-Aeta without losing our identity. I always tell our young AETA that only education will lighten us from the burden of poverty.

I still dream. And I dream for us to have a community college. To see our young Aetas continue cultivate our customary law and culture, despite the flooding of new technologies and media.

In the meantime, we have successful Aeta professionals: teachers, accountant, IT expert, and even an aspiring lawyer. The community has supported their studies, while parents strived to support their expenses. They are young Aetas who travelled and studied abroad, with the help of our partners. They begin to rethink solutions for our community needs. They come back to help our community.

I was a school dropout, but it never stopped me from dreaming. I know who I am, and who we are as a people. I have less money, but I am rich in knowledge. I am an Aeta. I stand tall and proud.



PHOTO FROM SHANTI BHAVAN

“

I wanted most to help the Dalit, the untouchable children of India. Most people believe that they don't deserve to excel. I believe otherwise.

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Haven of Peace: Touching the Hearts of the India's Untouchable Children

Abraham George

“Where were you in the Himalayas?” my children would often asked me. Often, my answers were brief. But I finally realize I have the urge to tell my story: There's a need for me to explain why I was there, why I had to be a soldier. Looking back, I suppose that some stage in one's life has greater impact on one's future than all others. For me, it was these army experiences that have helped me shape much of my outlook in life. Though it was not a lifetime career to pursue, the discipline I best learned in the army, I can still apply in my life.

I was born and grew up as a young man in Kerala, India. When I turned 14, I got admitted to the National Defence Academy. In my army days, I used to fire an artillery gun. Then sooner I got injured by a dynamite explosion, recovered, and eventually I rose to the rank of a Captain. And after 3 years of service, my hearing got bad, which was the reason why I need to move to the US with my mother, to undergo a surgery only available there at the time. With my mom working at NASA at the time, I started a new life in the US, and became a professional in economics and finance.

I have spent the next 25 years in the United States. I have felt I have gone to another world. Eventually, I felt that I needed to come back. I should give something back, and work among the poor, and give the opportunity that I have. I was given a good education, good career, so now it's my turn.

So I came back to tour in India after the longest time. It was a journey with my son Vivek, then 12, who had not seen India until then. Before the trip, I have told him stories about India's great people and rich heritage. I wanted him to be proud of his origins.

I was disheartened by what the Indian society has become. My once beautiful and quiet hometown in Trivandrum, Kerala has become too congested. Delhi, for instance, has become too polluted, one of the worst in the world. There is so much injustice and inequality. The caste system is still an influential institution. I sought to understand what causes so much poverty, illiteracy, and health problems, mostly among women and children.

I decided to devote myself in charitable works. I founded The George Foundation in Bangalore. My work here aims to help the poorest of the poor. From here, the Shanti Bhavan school was born.

I wanted most to help the Dalit, the untouchable children of India. They are considered to belong to the lower caste, which makes them extremely poor. A lot of them are forced to get jobs, sold for marriage, and become victims of abuse. They lack access to any good education. Most people believe that they don't deserve to excel. I believe otherwise. Give them the chance, tools and opportunities, they have the potential and can excel just as any other from a more privileged background. So I would give these children the same opportunities as the children of the wealthy and the powerful. It was a daring, pioneering act. I named it Shanti Bhavan—Haven of Peace.

Shanti Bhavan is a residential school. Just like a regular school, we offer pre-K-12 levels. Here, students are educated with the same subjects. At Shanti Bhavan, we give these poor kids the education they need, as well as boarding, meals, clothing, and medical care. Their families won't need to spend for it. They grew up well, study hard, and see how they dream and make them real in their lives. It's just so deeply gratifying to see them overcome their learning difficulties and trauma, and able to go beyond their challenging backgrounds, the crimes they experienced, and the sufferings they went through.

Many kids suffered domestic violence or sexual abuse. Others may have serious learning difficulties, like dyslexia and attention disorders. Some might have behavioral problems. By giving them the support, loving environment, and by giving special attention, these children are able to overcome all the challenges of their childhood. They turn out to be wholesome individuals.

And many of them begin to display leadership qualities. So to finally see them in a graduation ceremony is very emotional for me. It is a long journey, spanning over 14 years, but the outcome is deeply gratifying.

The task of raising these children is not just a personal thing for; it's a family thing, too. My wife, my sons are involved in this work. (My son Ajit George is school's current Director of Operations) From us down to the teachers, caregivers, and even the cleaning staff—all are involved in helping all these children learn and grow up. It is a total combined effort. We are constantly encouraging the kids, motivating them, and guiding them. We make it sure children know and feel that they are loved, and that we will be with them throughout their journey. This is not just a one-time thing. It is something we do every day, and in some ways, through every moment of every day. And you can see the change happening, and so you build on that, and soon you find that the kids are capable of overcoming all that has been holding them back. You will see that they themselves want to be better human beings. Successful human beings. They have a desire to help their families, their communities, and then the rest of the world.

Today, we are facing greater challenges in running the school. We are constantly striving to improve the quality of the care offered to Shanti Bhavan children. At some point in our mission, we are affected by a lack of financial resources. For example, the mattresses on which our children sleep have been used for the last 20 years, and they literally flattened out, or too soiled. Blankets are torn. Sports equipment like sneakers, jump ropes, soccer balls—all these gear are in short supply. We would very much like to take the children on outings to places nearby but have no school buses for that. We also have a shortage of staff. Salaries are low, and family quarters aren't available. As a result, it is difficult to attract quality staff members. If we overcome these challenges with better financial resources, we can offer better care, we can hire better teachers, and we can improve more our academic program.

But we continue to go on, and find solutions to these challenges. We look to the success we have had: the success of our students. Like Kumar and his former classmate Vijay. They are among the 14 students who once grew up in the slums and graduated in 2010, and now hold professional positions in several multinational companies. Like Shilpa Rij, who graduated in Shanti Bhavan, and succeeded to publish her memoir, *The Elephant Chaser's Daughter*, about the story of her family, her struggles in overcoming all challenges. And like the students featured in Netflix documentary, *Daughters of Destiny* (filmed by Veronica Roth)—their stories are told here, and the legacy of our school.

We are here to bring up the children, to love them and encourage them. This is what Shanti Bhavan really is.



“

Instead of studying inside the restricting space of classrooms, children are more encouraged to move around and experiment on available materials outdoors. We cultivate their spirit of independence and their capacity for cooperation.

”

Seriously Fun Learning

Dianna Gutierrez

My name is Diana Gutierrez. I used to be a shy and timid student. I would have stayed in my shell, if not for my education in this school that nurtured me. My vivid memories and deep loyalty to it have driven me to becoming its head. I have always felt the duty to come back and help sustain its caring environment and unique approach. Today, I am the principal of this school called JASMS—Jose Abad Santos Memorial School. It was once my old school. Today, it is our school.

JASMS is non-profit, co-educational, and teaches the JASMS way: locally developed and pioneering non-traditional and progressive educational philosophy. Our mission is to develop young one’s attitude, behavior, relationship and depth of wisdom as they grow into personhood, into maturity.

“A child grows up only once. Let his childhood be a happy one.” These are the words of JASMS Founder, Doreen Gamboa. And ever since, this is what JASMS is.

British psychologist Doreen Barber Gamboa married a Filipino and came to live in the Philippines. In 1933, together with Mrs. Priscilla Abaya, they set up a preschool in the fenced-in area around the gymnasium of the Philippine

Women's University. They fondly called it "the PWU Pre-school." Then PWU President Francisca Tirona Benitez, sponsored this novel, "child-centered" experiment in childhood education. It's a totally different, almost radical, educational approach in the 1930s.

But how child-centered is JASMS?

Here, children are allowed to be truly children. They play vigorously, explore their surroundings, and learn from one another. Instead of studying inside the restricting space of classrooms, they are encouraged more to move around and experiment on available materials outdoors. It is learning by doing that cultivates both their spirit of independence and their capacity for cooperation.

Traditionally, the task of education was left entirely up to the schools. But JASMS is different. Here, parents participate. They are always involved in designing school programs and activities. Volunteer help from parents on field trips, library help, supervision of playground, and resource persons in classes. Their observation of children and participation with teachers is a form of parent and teacher bonding.

Moreover, children partake in the formation of the curriculum. They have a chance to suggest how they would like to learn particular topics and what activities they would want to go through. They can also suggest related topics which interest them. It is also inquiry based where children's curiosities and passions become the basis of their exploration of their environment, their projects and their assessment.

Parents and children feel the very essence of JASMS: its friendliness and warm relationships, its absence of rigid pressures to conform to set standards, and its joy of learning. JASMS always encourages collaboration rather than competition, as well as an emphasis on group living in democracy.

JASMS believes that every child is precious to God. Children here have the sense of autonomy and respect their own urges for growth while still being aware of others and their needs. We take care of their well-being and meet their needs to understand and appreciate their home and community, extending it to the world at large. We hone their communication skills and nurture their sense of cooperation with their fellow children.

How do we do it?

Learning to be free. This is JASMS pioneering progressive approach.

Part of this is to help students know what they can accomplish versus what they aim to achieve. We have rubrics that students and teachers create and use together to assess their progress. There is no ranking or competition for

grades, nor do they compete against each other. Without competition, they take care of each other compassionately, especially those with less abilities and special needs.

When the school year begins, students get the chance to create their own rules and regulations inside the classroom. They all know, agree, and understand these rules and regulation, that's why every student abides by them.

Students do most of discussions and interactions by themselves, while teachers facilitate discussions to make sure everyone is engaged and heard. We allow students to discover their interests and share them with their classmates during class hours. Students also elect their own leaders, and leadership rotates every 2 weeks or every month to give everybody a chance to become a leader.

JASMS classrooms are huge and spacious. Every one of them has a mini library, a discovery area, and "chill out" area where students can just relax. Students don't sit on armchairs. Instead, they use triangular tables for Grade 4 to Grade 12, which they can play and put together into whatever puzzle shapes they want. This makes students interact with each other.

We only have 25 students per class. This number gives teachers more time to individualize instruction and grading system. Students and teachers work together to design grading rubrics, standards and requirements they need for the next quarter. We also listen to student's interest and use them so they can also come up with what lessons they want and how to pursue them.

To get ready and rested, we give little kids an hour to nap. For the older kids, they have a 30-minute break to dance, stroll, sit or just chat with their friends. They can also do sports, dance or play instruments, and form band groups.

We also have a very strong parent-teacher partnership. We believe that a well-rounded education is learning both at school and at home. Parents become our partners in molding the minds of their children. Hence, parents' active role in their children's school life is so important. They become our resource speakers, guests, teacher-aide, etc.

Most importantly, students are in touch with nature. In fact, we have a mini farm on the sixth floor of the school building. Children take care of butterflies, chickens, ducks, and birds. They observe these animals as they grow and multiply. We also have vertical gardens where children experiment on aquaponic and hydroponic farming.

There's a market day for kids to harvest their vegetables they organically planted and use them in their Home Economics classes. Kids also cook their own dishes, and they are all extraordinary. They do this by combining different dishes and create unique, edible and delicious recipes.

We also have a small carpentry shop. Here, kids can tinker with the different tools to create something they have envisioned, like furniture, tables, chairs, cabinets etc. There was a time when the kids tried to venture out on designing furniture for their room. They drew their designs first and then asked our in-house carpenter to help them in cutting and measuring the wood needed for the cabinets and the shelves. They started building their bag racks, book shelves and even a mat rack. It took a while before they could finish their project, but it turned out very nice. In fact, we are still using them now.

Safe and fun learning environment

As early as kindergarten, students are exposed and critically think new ideas, however right or wrong. We make the school safe and non-judgmental, to encourage students to speak their minds, ask questions, and challenge the status quo. We affirm their explorations, passions, and curiosity. For example, a child once asked: Why do we need to study numbers? Who invented this? Can a world exist without numbers? From these kinds of questions, lessons stem out and we respond to questions slowly.

JASMS is one big family. This is one of our secrets. From the University President resident to teachers, security guards, and utility personnel, all belong to one family. We all work together to make the school safe and fun. We all work together to make JASMS our students' second home.

Proudest moments

I am proud, always proud of my students, when they can choose to go to a school that they want. I am extra proud of my students with special needs. All of them get into colleges and graduate 4-year courses.

JASMS graduates have no trouble getting into traditional high schools and colleges. They survive and thrive in their new environment. Seeing them graduate from big universities with flying colors is an affirmation that we have given them a strong foundation that prepares them for the future that they want.

JASMS graduates can choose to go to their school of choice. Our students with special needs get into 4-year courses and thrive in traditional schools. And they all graduate from big universities with flying colors. This is an affirmation of the strong foundation that has prepared them well, for their future and their chosen path.

Because of all these, I am proud of my students. I am deeply proud of my school. Our school.



PHOTO FROM JESUS INSILADA

“

I readily embraced my indigenous name Igtaman to always remind me that I have no reasons to stumble or to be discouraged. I am destined to be a teacher to share my talents and skills, my insights and stories.

”

The Igtaman, Igniting Pride Among Panay Bukidnon

Jesus Insilada

My humble beginnings

I used to take an hour walking from home to school, crossing the river, barefoot after my worn-out slippers finally gave up. I wrap my rice on banana leaves for lunch. And sometimes I skipped meals. Still, I wanted to go. I wanted to study.

I was born to a young farming parents. We experienced a lot of hardship because of poverty. My father sold fish, did farming, and gathered tuba (coconut wine) to make a living. My mother had to leave us to work as a housemaid in the city. To help my parents, I worked in the farm on weekends—weeding grasses, planting rice, and harvesting corn, monggo, and coffee. I had to do this to add up on the little money my parents and siblings can afford to give me.

I dedicated my time and efforts on my studies because my family was really expecting so much from me. I studied high school and college at Calinog

Agricultural and Industrial College. Still, I am very thankful to them for they supported me on my desire to get a degree. Even so, life was then so hard for us; even my older siblings were discouraged to finish their studies.

Among them was Nereza, my *diding*, or elder sister. She delayed getting married to help support my studies. *Diding* worked as a *manikurista*, (giving nail care services), and as a beautician in a local salon. In 2000, she got married, right after my graduation, because according to her, she's not getting younger. She already had 3 children, my *pamangkin* (nieces and nephews), before she died from lupus in 2010. I am so thankful to *Diding*. I still remember her words. I can still hear her voice: "You are destined to become a teacher to inspire our community and to be an example to the poor but deserving students." *Diding's* words came true.

I am Jesus Catigan Insilada, turning 40, and I was once like my students. I struggled in my studies because of our poor economic status. I am a *tumandok*, an indigenous dweller in the mountains of Panay Island; I am part of the Panay Bukidnon community. Today, I am now the principal of Caniguan National High School, in the town of Calinog, Iloilo. Here is my story, a source of inspiration I share to my indigenous students and every teacher out there.

A teacher's journey

In 2000, I became a Volunteer Teacher at Alcarde Gustilo Memorial National High School, also in Calinog, receiving only PhP1,500 (about US \$32) as monthly honorarium. More than the money, I had the opportunity to practice teaching and to help the community school to serve the needs of the growing number of students. Two years after, the Local School Board appointed me as a locally-paid teacher. In 2005, I became a nationally-funded teacher when a permanent *plantilla* (teaching position) was opened at Badlan National High School, a neighboring school from where I teach.

When I started as teacher, I faced a lot of challenges: lack of facilities and teaching materials, less students' interest on their studies, and increasing number of dropouts. I realized at the time I could do something to address these most common problems in my school. The limitations on facilities and materials have encouraged me to become resourceful and creative. I have devised teaching aids using recycled and indigenous materials.

I also begun to integrate relevant aspects of our Panay Bukidnon culture that work best for my indigenous students. I used the indigenous knowledge system (IKS)—folk songs, arts, crafts, popular *sugidanun* (epics), local games, dances, traditions, and beliefs—as a very rich resource. I used all these as materials to teach concepts in language, math, livelihood, history, physical fitness, health, music, among others. This is the perfect example of a culture-

based education. Through this system, students actively participated and became more engaged in their learning. It has boosted their self-esteem and made them a proud member of our indigenous cultural community.

I came across culture-based education in 2004, when I joined the Asosasyon ng mga Dalubhasa, may Hilig at Interes sa Kasaysayan (ADHIKA), an organization of social science teachers and professors. I have begun to learn from my colleagues' many related studies and teaching techniques on history and culture. Since I have been teaching and serving in the Panay Bukidnon community, I have always felt that there was really a need to employ culture-based teaching pedagogies, to make every lesson relevant to every student's culture and realities. In the long run, based on test results, class participation, and my personal observations, I am deeply convinced that culture-based teaching is profoundly effective to improve students' achievement and decrease drop-out rate.

Recognitions

In 2008, I was awarded as one of the ten outstanding teachers in Iloilo Schools Division, highlighting my innovations in integrating culture in my teaching practice. In 2013, I won in Leksiyong Sagisag Kultura, a plan exemplar writing contest sponsored by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the Department of Education (DepEd).

That same year Bato Balani Foundation chose me as one of the four honorees in The Many Faces of the Teacher. The foundation has recognized my efforts and dedication in integrating culture into my lessons, as well as for documenting and writing about our culture to preserve and make it alive. The following year, the Metrobank Foundation also awarded me as one of the ten outstanding teachers in the country. Also, both City Savings Bank and Eastwest Rural Bank have recognized my culture-based teaching and its impact, particularly to the less privileged students.

Just last year, the DepEd nominated me for the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Award as one of the outstanding educators in Southeast Asia (SEA). According to the foundation, they have chosen one exceptional teacher per SEA country who has left an indelible impact on education and human development.

Early this year, Bill Gates announced through social media the top 10 finalists of Varkey Foundation's Global Teacher Prize. I was among them. And this international feat is not about me, but to the whole community of Panay-Bukidnon, and all rural schools.

The idea that I am among the best teachers in the world hardly sank in, yet I am so much thankful to all these local and international award-giving bodies for recognizing my efforts. I have always imagined how my community

would revel on these recognitions. For these awards are not to aggrandize my teaching achievements, but to tell the world that despite being deprived and underestimated, we, the indigenous cultural communities, are all talented and empowered people. I have seen how my people, especially my students, felt so overjoyed on these awards. Despite having felt inferior and less motivated, they have become deeply proud of who they truly are. Aside from advocating culture-based teaching and propagating our culture as Panay Bukidnon, I also write poetry and fiction for Hiligaynon, a leading Ilonggo weekly magazine since 1934. Most often, I write about my people, our culture and identity. Since 2008, I have reaped four Palanca awards including two golds. I am also the NCCA Writers' Prize Winner for Hiligaynon novel for with my entry, 'Tumandok' (Native), a work in progress which I will finalized later this year.

Romulo Caballero, Panay Bukidnon's cultural master, described me as an *igtaman*, which means "someone who has so much to share". I readily embraced my indigenous name *Igtaman* to always remind me that I have no reasons to stumble or to be discouraged. I believe, just like my Diding did, that I am destined to become a teacher to share to them my talents and skills, my insights and story.

As I look back, I have come to realize that my struggles as a poor student really taught me a lot of introspection and empathy with my students. We all belong to the same cultural community and humanity. I feel and respond to this huge responsibility of helping and uplifting the lives of my students through education. Every day, I always feel inspired and motivated to see them dedicate and persevere despite the difficulties brought about by poverty and deprivation. Every time I share to them my story and triumph, they always get inspired. I can deeply relate to them. They are truly the source of my inspiration, the reason I keep on going, to provide them what they need to have a kind of education they truly deserve.



PHOTO FROM KAMAL LAMICHANNE

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It is always important to learn together and work together. We should erase the gap between people by knowing and helping each other better.

”

From Darkness to Brightness

Dr. Kamal Lamichanne

I felt the dark side of life in my childhood. It was an era full of anxiety. Before I was 12 years old, I spent most of my childhood at home. I had no hopes and no dreams. I had no future to envision. People around me said that I would suffer hardships throughout my life. My mother used to cry, worrying about who would take care of me after her death.

I was not even educated, this is because my family was not aware of educating children with visual impairments. I had the thirst for learning, but I was not given the opportunity to go to school because of my blindness. So, when my siblings were studying, I told myself, “If there is a chance offered to me, I would definitely study.”

Eventually, everything changed. My father found out that education for the blind was possible. Someone told him that there was an organization in Kathmandu that supports children with visual impairments. I was 12 years old, and a life-changing moment came to me. My father and I travelled 200 km for 6 or 7 hours to the capital city, for me to attend a school that offers inclusive education.

It was the first time that I left my house to live on my own in a dormitory, away from my family and friends. At first, I felt lonely and homesick. I had to be

familiar with my new environment, using my cane to go around the school. I eventually adapted and adjusted to school life. I thought that because I was finally given a chance to get an education, I had to take it seriously. I had no other choice but to study.

I attended an inclusive school. Children, both with and without visual impairments, studied here together. When I entered the school, it was the first time that non-disabled children encountered a visually impaired person. They, too, were not familiar with my disability. So, in a way, I was lost in the crowd. Some were interested in me. Some were curious of me. Some were even scared.

Eventually, when I started to do well in school, my classmates became my good friends. I would teach my classmates the subjects which I was good at. In turn, they would also teach me subjects that I have difficulty with. That interaction, I could say, shortened the cold gaps between us. Since we studied together, they slowly got to know me—that I am human being, just like them. The only difference is, I could not see. I consulted with them after class about the lessons in school. This, I think, is one of the reasons that helped me complete my education.

Aside from my classmates, it was also the first time that teachers encountered a student like me. They were not trained to handle visually impaired students. No modifications and adaptations in teaching were made because they still did not know how. They also asked the non-disabled children to treat me as normally as possible. Despite these, the teachers worked hard to learn how to teach the blind. They learned by doing.

In order to assist me and other visually impaired students, the organization provided one resource teacher who was specially trained. This resource teacher taught Braille and mobility skills to all visually impaired children like me, so they can prepare us for school. She collaborated with mainstream school teachers such as in translating our school work from Braille to regular print. She also served as a consultant for the mainstream teachers whenever problems occur. However, there are times that I had to give my answers to my homework orally as there was no established provision for blind children. This was how I was able to perform in school.

Once in a while, during my schooling, I would remember negative words others told me, but I did not mind them anymore. I became used to hear them. Those hurtful words pushed me more to study hard and prove myself to be a capable person. What contributed to success was my perseverance to show that I can do things like others.

It was a series of paradigm shifts, which won't happen if not for my education: from darkness to brightness, discrimination to acceptance, exclusion to

inclusion, charity to rights investment, and negative to positive perception about disability. In my case, it is not my blindness that matters, but it is the environment and the opportunities given to me.

I believe that the past is guiding me to these contemporary times. I am proud of the activities that I have been able to carry on, such as my work as a professor and a researcher. However, it is not my PhD or my master's degree that has the most significant impact in my life, but the first time that I had access to education.

What I learned in my life experiences is that everybody in the world has strengths, as well as limitations. We are not independent but are all interdependent. Interdependency means we all exist because we help each other exist. There are certain things that one can do and certain things that one cannot do. However, we may not realize this fact. I call this poverty of awareness. Poverty of awareness is what stopping us to realize our interdependency. It is related to our mindset and our attitudes that need to change. For instance, people who did not know about visual disability were initially surprised when they looked at me. But when they started to study with me, they slowly started to become more aware. We learned together despite our differences and started to look at what makes us similar, and that poverty of awareness gradually faded away.

For me, it is important to live with dignity. However, dignity does not just come from volunteer support. I do not want to live out of sympathy. That is why the welfare of people with disability should be the state's responsibility. The government should build proper support systems for all children with disabilities, not only visual, but also hearing impairments, physical impairments, and other developmental disabilities.

Schools should also provide supporting environments. There should be reasonable accommodations. Teachers should be made aware so that they can modify their teaching methods for children with special needs. Infrastructures should also be accessible. Lastly, technology and materials, such as Braille for the visually impaired or sign language for the hearing impaired, should also be appropriate for the children. Thus, significant increase in investment education is needed.

I envision a future of inclusive learning environment for all learners. Here, every individual's needs are addressed, so that each can perform equally. First and foremost, people in this kind of learning environment should have a welcoming attitude, where diversity of abilities and backgrounds is always accepted, may it be for women, for religious minorities, and for people with disabilities. It is always important to learn together and work together. We should erase the gap between people by knowing and helping each other better.



“

I continue to grow and learn, to be touched and nurtured, and to be inspired by the people and community I live and work with.

”

The Home Where Peace Begins

Kaloy Manlupig

A betrayal 23 years ago has changed my life forever.

I was then working as a Regional Director in the Department of Agrarian Reform in Mindanao. Those whom I considered friends and colleagues orchestrated efforts and used lies and deception to discredit me. They sought to demonize, demoralize, and paralyze my character by filing baseless complaints against me. (The courts eventually dismissed all seven complaints.) They sought the help of their padrinos, (patron/comrades) mostly trapos (traditional politicians) and big landlords, and organized mass action, to demand my removal from office. Worse, even political and ideological groups took advantage of the situation. The political cadres were the most ruthless. Trabaho lang daw, walang personalan (pure work, nothing personal).

I never stooped to their level. I took instead an honorable way out. Despite being cleared of all the charges, I still opted to leave government service. I have moved on since then, learning a lot from that experience. But those darkest moments also became shining moments, as I experienced the support, care and love of my family, friends and the farmers I worked with. This crisis scarred me, but I survived—now wiser and stronger.

And after the chaos, I suddenly had plenty of time! After 24 years of doing development work, and despite the unexpected tough luck, I had the time to heal and re-energize, to reflect and dream. It was the moment of crisis-turned-inspiration, and it became the kernel of my dream for Mindanao, the true home for every Mindanaons. To me, the painful episode was a serendipity. Together with some golden friends, we began to envision a new journey. And in those dark and lonely moments, we gave birth to Balay Mindanaw.

Inspired by farmers who welcome us as their comrades in their struggle for ownership of their farmlands, we decided to put up Balay Mindanaw as an organization that supports their land rights. We were then guided and supported by a respected land rights advocate, Gerry Bulatao.

Educating farmers

What Balay Mindanaw first did was to educate farmers of their rights and responsibilities as key people. We held agrarian reform information campaign, education seminars and workshops for leaders among peasant organizations and NGO workers. We also encouraged farmers to claiming their rights assertively and persistently.

From Balay Mindanaw we deployed community organizers in the field. They are called Sustainable Integrated Area Organizers or SIADOs (pronounced shadows). Their primary task is to work and live with farmers and help them understand their situation on owning their lands. They also help organize and strengthen farmers' association.

Principle of strength in unity or power in numbers—this is where we base our efforts. While community is the locus and focus of our work, we have also provided the space for women to genuinely participate and lead. In simple acts, we have ensured women's participation in all projects, at least half the number of the entire participants. Women among us are community leaders and resource persons.

Our efforts to teach and educate have gradually evolved to training farmers as paralegals, studying more on land reform laws, demystifying legal jargons and processes, to farmers can better understand them. As farmers are aware of these laws, they can interpret them, mediate local land conflicts, avoid complicated legal procedures, and even represent themselves in court proceedings when necessary. Farmers become more self-confident to peacefully fight for their land rights.

Peacebuilding

Many communities see soldiers as intruders, spies, and at times enemies. They are sent to war to get their combat experience, and to test their military strengths. This is how military generals earn their stars. However, military as an institution is not monolithic. People inside now think more progressively. Many of their comrades have been seeking to transform the image and mindset of soldiers. In fact, key officers want to be allies and partners to local communities

So part of our project is to transform the mindset of soldiers. We decided to start somewhere, modestly. We warmed up with soldiers and paramilitary officers assigned in the areas we were working in. Then we invited them to attend our community-based seminars and conferences. We slowly persuaded them that they don't need to spy, as they are an important part of the community. Much later, we designed a peace and development course for the local army battalion.

A major breakthrough inevitably came. Ayi Hernandez, then BMFI's Executive Director met General Raymundo Ferrer during Bridging Leadership Training. At that time, General Ferrer was beginning to gain recognition as the "peace general". He has gained the respect of the civil society and local communities by reaching out to them. He even, attended the Mindanao Peace Institute, the first soldier to do so.

Ayi and General Ferrer began talking about collaboration. They both agreed that they need to work hard to transform the mindsets of soldiers. During this time, Balay Mindanaw had already gained extensive experience in conducting peace courses for tribal and community leaders, local governments, NGOs and peoples' organizations, through its Operation Peace Course (OP Kors!). We redesigned OP Kors! for the military.

Op Kors! has since expanded to educate NGOs, communities, local government units, indigenous peoples, the Philippine Army, and even the Philippine National Police. General Ferrer initially committed an entire infantry division to undergo the peace course. As of today, about 1,000 military and police officers are now graduates of our peace courses.

Beginnings of Peace Work

Our first peacebuilding work started in 2003. We got a request to help set up and act as mediator and independent secretariat to the formal peace process between the Philippine Government and the Revolutionary Workers Party of Mindanao (RPMM), a breakaway group from the Communist Party of the Philippines – New People's Army – National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF).

The catch was: we had absolutely no background in peace negotiations, mediation, and peacebuilding. However, we realized we had one basic and ultimate resource to mediate and negotiate: Trust. We said yes to the invitation. And soon, it opened the peacebuilding door to us as a local NGO. Since then, we have been actively involved in regional and global peace initiatives and networks. Eventually, we became the secretariat of Action Asia, a network of peace practitioners from all over Asia and the Pacific. It was our opportunity to mainstream our technologies for community organizing, community participation, and people empowerment.

Reflecting on the experience, I can say this work has indeed become a journey of trust-building, and a space for transforming person, relationships, institutions, and hopefully, societal structures.

A House that Volunteers Built

Back in 1996, we started with nothing except a few good women and men who wanted to help transform Mindanao right here in Mindanao and volunteered to be part of the journey towards equity, development and peace. We had no money, no office, no track record. Only us, volunteers. That was twenty- two years ago.

The first volunteers came in the first year. And more volunteers came year after year after year. British, Irish, German, American, Australian, Maltese, Khmer, Nepali, and more Filipino volunteers joined our lot. Those first line of volunteers are now key managers, leaders, and mentors. Whenever we respond to disasters, we have a large pool of volunteers from here and abroad.

Balay Mindanaw is a house that volunteers built. Now, it is a home of volunteers.

The year 2017 was somehow different. For the first time, our volunteers were supposed to be victims of the Marawi armed conflict. They are mostly Meranaw youth who are embodiments of our mantra: “We refuse to be victims. We choose to be resources.” They are internally displaced people (IDPs) who had taken courage to rise up and be of service to their fellow IDPs. Instead of waiting to be served, they decided to serve. Instead of being nurtured, they decided to nurture others. That years' experience, was more of a spiritual journey of working and living with people of other faiths.

I am a Roman Catholic, and my faith has been strengthened and inspired by these young Muslims. The past year was a year of interfaith living and interfaith serving. The Meranaw IDP volunteers, helped me renew my faith in the basic goodness of people, in the Filipino and Mindanaon's indomitable spirit; that there is indeed hope for just and lasting peace in our homeland.

I once began my journey as volunteer myself in the 1970s. That's why I take volunteer programs and the volunteers very seriously. I thought it is always my duty to teach young people. It is my duty to touch their lives by being with them. Yet I have realized that I am learning a lot from them. They have touched my life. I thought that mentoring and nurturing young volunteers are in a way a personal mission, yet I am the one they have nurtured. I thought it was my mission to inspire and energize these young people, yet it turned out they are the ones inspiring and energizing me.

Today, I continue to grow and learn, to be touched and nurtured, and to be inspired by the people and communities I live and work with.

Here I am, and I continue my journey.



PHOTO FROM RAYMUND NARAG

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Despite the wretchedness of those who struggle behind bars, there is dignity in every experience, there is a ray of hope, a reason to celebrate freedom!

”

Emb(e)ttered!

Raymund Narag

How a then 20-year old student was jailed for almost 7 years, and later emerged as a beacon-bearer of transforming lives of fellow inmates.

I was a valedictorian in my high school class. My father used to say I would go a long way. He was proud of me. And then four years later, I was jailed. Wrongfully.

It was December 8, 1994. A group of masked men attacked a group of Sigma Rho fratmen eating inside a school canteen, hitting them with baseball bats and tubo (lead pipes). Students ran away, but one male student tripped over. Like a pack of wolves, these men attacked the student. He was Dennis Venturina, a graduating cum laude student and chair of a student council. He died two days later.

Then April 27, 1995 came, three days before my UP graduation day. An arrest warrant was issued against me. I was among the group of Scintilla Juris fraternity members accused of the crime. A false testimony came out: it said that the bonnet mask worn by one attacker fell off (which was impossible to happen, because it tightly covered the entire head), and revealed his face—my face. Everything in my life ruined that day. I became a criminal for a crime I did not—and never will—commit.

In May 24, 1995, together with 10 other accused, I voluntarily surrendered to the police. Instead of diploma, I showed my parents detention papers. Instead the sound of applause, my feet were dragged to the prison cell. It was the day as if my parents died, and my family uprooted.

It was my hardest realization. To me, fraternity has become a big black hole. Its culture has become barbaric despite its noble and lofty ideals. It is unforgiving to its enemies. It sows the seed of violence. Brothers become brothers only after undergoing their rite of passage—a ritual of physical and psychological violence. To its members, this ritual is a normal practice. They anchor their strength on secrecy, in their code of silence—a big barrier to hold perpetrators accountable for young men's death. These promising young men are being sucked to their graves. Young men like Dennis. Young men like me.

I patiently waited for freedom. I endured the long prosecution—or more fittingly, persecution. I was burdened by the shame of getting out of jail handcuffed. I gentlemanly gave time and space for my beloved, to relieve her of so much pressure in the situation we were in.

I was only 20 years old, behind bars, naïve to all harsh realities of the world. I was emotionally ruined, and bitter of being jailed. I could not fathom how a person like me, idealistic and innocent, would undergo such travails and end up like this. I lived in a substandard cell of Quezon City Jail, inhumanely sheltering 30 people instead of 5. I was forced to eat tuyo, (dried fish) which barely sustained me. I could not understand why all of these had to happen. My myopic mind questioned God: “Do I really deserve this suffering?”

Then God worked in His mysterious ways.

As I was about to sink in despair, God sent floaters in my life: I met Sister Auxi, a religious nun, who made me an assistant to her prison ministry. I met Bobby and his fellow brothers in Christ Youth Action who introduced me to Bible reading. A group called UP Pahinungod welcomed me as a full-time volunteer. My parents continued to support me, steadfastly, without doubt. My girlfriend's advice “be a good boy” continued to ring on me, reminding me at moments of being tempted to corruption inside the jail. And when my emotions were down the drain, Dan, a fellow accused, became my pillar of strength.

I believe God led and hooked me. I began volunteering my services to the Jail Bureau. I taught literacy program, teaching fellow inmates on basic reading and writing. I worked as a paralegal coordinator, monitoring cases of inmates whose release was long overdue. I started a Bible study group called Kristo Okay sa Amin or KOSA, to spark and grow brotherly love among the warring prison gangs.

In my fourth year, I became *Mayór de Mayores*, the topmost position within inmates' political hierarchy. I helped the jail warden overseeing prison activities: keeping the jail surroundings clean, preventing conflicts between gangs, and raising funds to sustain reformation programs. Indeed, I experienced firsthand the intricacies of managing a crowded, underfunded, undermanned prison institution.

Quezon City Jail chaplain Father Tony Rañada once told me that God has a reason why he sent me here: to tame my wild and insatiable soul. Before being jailed, I once looked forward to a Machiavellian life of practicing law, dreaming to become a shrewd lawyer. "Nah!" God said, "I have better plans!"

Eventually, with peace in my heart, I have accepted my fate, knowing that there is always a reason—a divine reason—for everything. Instead of being embittered, I was embettered! I slowly realized God's undying love for me, His immense plans to prosper me. In finally finding the reason, I claimed my freedom. I may be a maligned inmate, but I am spiritually free. I must use my intellect and skills for His glory.

So I began ardently documenting the problems of jail administration. I started studying the reasons why my fellow inmates ended up in jail, what makes gangs violent, how drugs are sold and spread inside, and how prison officers kept their professional integrity despite low salaries and lack of personnel. I wrote letters to big media and policymakers, providing them a realistic analysis of why jail escapes happen, what causes riots, and anything to portray a true understanding of jail life. Indeed, right at the heart of Quezon City Jail, I was introduced and trained to the field of criminal justice.

On February 28, 2002, I became a freeman. I endured 6 years, 9 months and 4 days—wrongfully accused! At 27, I lost the most youthful years of my life. But I was a changed man.

I wrote a book—*Freedom and Death Inside the City Jail*—chronicling my jail experience. The book gained support from United Nations Development Program and published by the Supreme Court. Former Chief Justice Hilario Davide described my book as an "eye-opener". He used it as the basis for wide-ranging Action Program for Judicial Reforms. And, in an unforgettable moment, I spoke before 15 justices of the Supreme Court about the story of my incarceration and redemption. One female justice came to me, teary-eyed and whispered, "Our courts could only express our apology."

Apologies accepted! But more than that, I want to call our leaders to take action in helping our inmates and the oppressed. I want them to nurture the passion for serving people.

My experience has become my source of solutions. Instead of early release, inmates stay longer due to inefficient record system. So we came up with

Simplified Inmates Records System or SIRS to computerize their carpeta (inmates' documents and records) for easy and accurate access. We also started using Detainee's Notebook, for inmates to self-monitor their cases.

These and other efforts to decongest jail were noticed by the Quezon City government. I was awarded the Outstanding Citizen Award in 2005: from a lowly inmate to a model citizen. To God be the glory.

A new journey

This was the beginning of another journey. I became a Fulbright Scholar in August 2005, and studied Masters' Degree in Criminal Justice at the Michigan State University. My thesis focused on Filipino respondents and the correlates of victimization—on factors that relate to what makes them victims of a perpetrated crime. And I was again awarded another scholarship, this time for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree.

But it was a long and arduous journey. I burned candles to read crime theories. I stayed long hours in the library to master methods on collecting data. I refreshed my old math skills to work on statistical analysis. I almost gave up, asking God if I really made the right decision. While studying, I seemingly miss my 2 kids, even as they grew up right before my eyes.

I again clung to God's promise. He sent me to prison and plucked me out. There's a reason why I must study abroad and become a Filipino expert in criminal justice.

While studying I was introduced to a church, which became my spiritual family. People here nourished and deepened my understanding of God's Word. I grew spiritually, realizing that any efforts to improve a justice or social system must be based on the foundation of truth and love. It has since guided my future efforts to improve my country's justice system.

I could have graduated officially back in 1995. And yet in April 2002, after 7 years, I did it. I was excited to finally finish my bachelor's degree, cum laude, at the University of the Philippines College of Public Administration and Governance. I was the oldest among the graduates, who were mostly 7 years younger than me. Finally, I marched on, tall and proud.

And on May 4, 2012, I earned my PhD in Criminal Justice at Michigan State University. What was once a young man falsely accused of a crime he did not commit has now become "Dr. Narag" to many. I again marched on tall and proud, grateful for those who remained faithful in me. I testify to the triumph of human spirit. And above all, I testify to proclaim God's love.

Way Forward

In my research turned into a book, *Freedom and Death Inside the City Jail*, I chronicled the stories of inmates, jail officers, volunteers, and even their visitors at the Quezon City Jail Community. The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology or BJMP took these stories seriously. These stories enlightened them, as they began to be aware of the realities and issues inside the city jail and have taken measures to address them.

1. Build a new Quezon City Jail with adequate facilities for reformation programs.
2. Provide basic needs for inmates, better compensation for jail officers and hiring additional jail personnel.
3. Empower the BJMP director to give Good Conduct Time Allowance for deserving inmates
4. Review BJMP Manual and incorporate the principles of pangkat, patakaran, panungkulan, and other financial schemes developed by inmates.
5. Include activities conducted by volunteers, business communities and visitors in the Jail's programs.

Afterword

I also got a positive response from BJMP Director Arturo W. Alit on solution they have taken to better inmate's conditions, not only in Quezon City Jail, but also in other jails across the country.

1. Developed a proposal to establish Integrated Reformatory Center (IRC) to consolidate all jails into a single center for each city or district, and to pilot this also in Metro Manila.
2. Filed a bill for the IRC project in 2005. It aims to build a 70-hectare government property in Montalban, Rizal. It is a homespun community with sub-facilities for attendants: personnel housing, schoolhouse, wet and dry market, warehouse, dental and medical clinic, etc. Its main facility, the jail center, will include buildings for rehabilitation, recreation and spiritual activities. This will help inmates to undergo educational programs. There will also be vast land area for agriculture, and inmates will serve as its workforce. The vision is to make the IRC a self-supporting, sustainable institution.

However, these two recommendations never materialized. Congress did not take it up. It died a natural death in the legislative mill.

3. Hired additional quality personnel and give them higher compensation, as supported by the new law, RA 9263, or An Act of providing for the Professionalization of the Bureau of Fire Protection and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology Amending Certain Provisions of RA 6975, providing funds thereof and for other purposes. Most applicants are board passers, eligible under RA 1080 or An act Declaring the Bar and Board Examination as Civil Service Examination, equivalent to second level or professional eligibility.

BJMP Modernization Law was promulgated in 2006. The law aims to further professionalize BMP. This is one of the best outputs in this advocacy.

4. Upgraded the quality of training for recruits, middle level non-officers, and officers, through changes in programs of instructions at the National Jail Management and Penology Training Institute (formerly Jail National Training Institute)

Indeed, the quality of recruits, the continuous education they received, and their promotional qualifications have improved considerably since my time in jail.

The Lord has continuously used me in this advocacy work. I continue to write the stories of many detainees and design solutions on prison management, among them are:

1. Understanding Factors Related to Prolonged Trial of Detained Defendants in the Philippines. An International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, Narag, 2017
2. Putting Out Fires: Understanding the Developmental Nature and Roles of Inmate Gangs in the Philippine Overcrowded Jails. An International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, Narag and Lee, 2017
3. Inside the Bilibid Drug Trade: Explaining the roles of the Mayores and the Pangkat and Offering Policy Recommendations, Raymund E. Narag
4. Understanding Prison Management in the Philippines: A Case for Shared Governance. The Prison Journal, Narag, 2016
5. Philippine Prison Gangs: Control or Chaos? C. R. Jones, R.E. Narag, R.S. Morales, 2015

My advocacy aims to improve jail and prison management by incorporating principles of classification, housing, rehabilitation and documentation and assessment of inmate behaviors. I have discovered that inmate leadership structure is rooted in the Filipino culture of *damayan* and *bayanihan*, cultural traits that inmates have imported (Irwin & Cressey, 1962) into the prison culture. The inherent collectivist nature of society, respect for people in authority, and penchant for family and community suggest that shared governance of prison management, as practiced in a Philippine setting, all have a developmental component.

I have conducted a 4-month training program for jail and prison officers, and even for police and court employees, on how to make the criminal justice system integrated and efficient. Recently, I have partnered with the Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations Development Program to introduce a Human Rights Based Approach to Effective Penal Management. I am one of the few prison scholars who study the prison dynamics in a developing country setting, to help other countries design and implement prison programs that match their resources and culture.

Here is my story, and the stories behind it, and I give this to all of you who dream for a better world. Despite the wretchedness of those who struggle behind bars, I hope to bring these stories as shining rays of hope. No matter how distressing, with the right perspective, there is dignity in every experience. This is my life story—a celebration of freedom!



PHOTO FROM GERTRUDE NILES

“

Many parents spoke openly about their child's performance even though some of them were clueless because they were functional illiterates and the most wonderful thing happened: children started teaching their parents to read.

”

Nobody Should Ever Be Left Behind

Gertrude Niles

Little Johnny did not complete his secondary education. He is just like the many children in my village. Many of these children's mothers are living day to day hoping to get a job in someone's garden. Some children have dropped out of primary school, around grades 3, 4 or 5, because there was nothing to eat. And when pride steps in the way of commonsense, mothers also keep their children at home. "I have nothing to eat so I am not sending my children to school," parents would usually complain. In this tiny island called Carriacou, where I always belong, we could not anymore sweep this problem under the rug. We need to do something about it. And this is my story.

Carriacou is part of Grenada, a tri-island state in the southeastern part of the Caribbean Sea. Everything about Grenada is "small", with a land area of only 344 square kilometers and a population of 107,317 (as of 2016). Our population has remained flat in decades because of the high migration rate of the youth to other parts of the Caribbean, such as Barbados and Trinidad and, of course to the first world countries like USA and the UK. Estimates show at least 100,000 Grenada-born people in other parts of the Caribbean, and another equal number of Grenadians spread across the first world countries. In Carriacou, on the other hand, there are 6,000 inhabitants spread over its

34 square kilometers land area. We are so few in the island and that makes every child count. So in learning how to read and write, nobody should EVER be left behind.

For ten years, I taught with all my might. Or so I thought. I have been flipping through pages, without even realizing that my strategy to teach reading only benefitted a few students. Whenever I tell them “turn to page 10 and read”, or “student X, say the word for student Y to hear you”, I thought I was properly teaching all of them to read. But I never did. With other teachers, we complained about the students’ poor reading abilities, mostly way below their grade levels. We wondered why. We kept on blaming their poor performance to lack of parental guidance, and many other distractions. We made every excuse in the world, while we did not turn to ourselves and examine the things we are not doing so well.

As their English teacher, I felt powerless to change the abilities of the students. I was also not able to do any research to improve their reading competencies. I thought that teaching from the book—a page-to-page *modus operandi*—was all the best I knew, the effective strategy to engage more than thirty students in a class. And later, my fellow teachers and I realized that our strategies have a negative impact on our students’ performance. We wasted students’ time and energy, while we were being paid monthly for this huge mistake, because our students never returned anymore to school.

No matter what our life status is, reality has a way of hitting home to the best of us. These are hard lessons learnt, but they are all productive, impactful and life-changing. When my two children were growing up, I was obliged to teach them how to read at home, just before they entered formal school. An educator like me is expected to train their child, so they can perform above the ordinary in reading readiness, be capable of counting up to 10 or 20 or even up to a hundred, or able to recite days of the week, and memorize the national anthem. Little did I know that the moment of truth was behind the corner, when my children turned 3 years old, which is the preschool age.

At that time, many schools in Carriacou thought that the fundamental cause of the students’ poor performance from pre-school to secondary school was their inability to “read”. In school meetings, we started looking for solutions and we wanted it right away. Time was so important, just as everyone in the island is important. We thought that the volunteers assisting us in our school had the knowledge of a reading strategy that works for the children. Or so they led us to believe.

Until a resource person from England came and introduced us to the “Systematic Synthetic Phonics” approach to teach reading. We never heard about many phonics strategies before, but we openly listened and willingly learnt. But in the silence of our minds, we questioned the effectiveness of this approach. We were still not yet prepared to let go of our traditional belief

that 'reading is comprehension'. Throughout the discussion, we realized the need to employ research to improve our teaching and learning practices, especially when the strategies we were accustomed to are no longer working. We began to understand that our students were failing because we were oblivious to the harm we were forever causing them in teaching them 'how to read' just by merely turning the pages.

So, we started using our newfound reading strategy. We learned that the knowledge of the Alphabetic Code is critical in learning to read and spell, and that if we combine sounds we can read and spell. Simplistic as this may sound, but it is true. We learned these codes, and then its Alternatives. We taught our students that pronouncing the sounds is more important than reciting the letter names. We taught them that a letter name is a representation of the sounds and we linked all of what we are doing to "learning how to read". Nothing is done in isolation. We did a lot of speaking activities for students who are learning to read for the first time, so as to strengthen what they learnt and to integrate this approach in all other subject areas.

The results were phenomenal. All our students started to read. Their confidence has grown, and their word attack skills are now quite noticeable. I felt so elated, proud, and encouraged. Many parents spoke openly about their child's performance. Even those parents who have functional illiteracy spoke about their children's progress and the most wonderful thing that happened: children started teaching their parents to read!

As a teacher for over 20 years and supervisor for five years, I have felt a sense of achievement. No longer was I faced with sad faces from our teachers whenever I visit schools. Now, I was called to visit to listen to the students who read. Rich children, poor children, and marginalized children are all learning in one class together. This tiny island of Carriacou has achieved something that seemed unreachable. Little Ashlyn, whose mother care less if she learns or not, achieved reading mastery. Tom, who was not expected to get beyond Grade 1 because his mother and siblings never entered secondary school, became a shining light in the village; every Sunday, Tom is the featured Bible reader during church service. Another child, Montel, whose mother was always drunk, has learned to become a fluent reader. Teachers were elated and parents, irrespective of their status, were proudly encouraging their students to "read" for all to hear.

I was the enabler in this new movement. I began facilitating this process. Though I never vocalize my indecisions and disbeliefs, I allowed the principals and teachers to apply their new learnt skills for the benefit of other students under their care. We dedicatedly meet every two weeks, to discuss and plan the way forward and to lend support to those who were struggling to read. It has benefited all of us. We do know that in life, struggle is part of any new initiative, but when the support structure is in place, it empowers individuals to blossom naturally even under stress, indecision and

discouragement. Perseverance and belief in oneself enabled a new initiative. This “implementation of Synthetic Phonics” is so far the best method I have learned in teaching reading.

I am now wearing a different hat. With the success of the Synthetic Phonics in schools, I now sit as the Literacy Coordinator in the Adult and Lifelong Learning Unit of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development and the Environment of my country Grenada. My next challenge is to introduce basic education skills to families through family learning across the entire Grenada. With this task, I keep my faith that God will once again show me the rainbow in the sky.



PHOTO FROM DEPED PHILIPPINES

“

Everyone should have a place because all children have potential.

”

Every Learner Counts

Dina Ocampo

When I was a teacher, I found something about myself I never thought about: I had dyslexia.

I was part of a team that put up Wordlab, an NGO that helps children with dyslexia. We then organized a teacher training program to bring Slingerland Institute here in the Philippines. The trainer we had, noticed that my handwriting was really bad. So, she asked me to do some reading assessment tasks using the Slingerland method. That made the big reveal. And I laughed when I found out.

In my student days, I never had an inkling that I had dyslexia. I don't think the school even knew that I had a disability. I grew up an avid reader. When a word gets difficult to read, I would read it over and over, until I understood the text. I even thought everybody had the same difficult. Though I never had any intervention, the teachers took time to do remedial work with me. I remember vividly when I was in first grade, my teacher took time to teach me how to read. After class, my teacher would help me spell and fix my handwriting.

Even if my classmates had other conditions, which may look like ADHD, or Dyslexia, or any other learning disability, it was not debilitating for us. The school I attended had small class size, and teachers were well trained. Teachers did their job well - teaching us, regardless of who we were or what conditions we had. I was blessed to have very experienced teacher who was confident of giving us a chance to be independent.

In order to cope, I have learned to be very thorough. I spend time making checklists of things to do. For example, if I am going to do research, I must plan things ahead before they begin up until they end. I must organize myself in order to accomplish them well. I also read a lot, even during summer breaks. I become aware of things I do not know, and I often ask questions.

However, math was a bigger problem for me. I swapped numbers whenever I do multiplication. Doing numbers is what I find very difficult, something that I still struggle with up to now. Even though I understand math conceptually, it is hard to solve math problems. I always need to take it step by step. And my helpful strategy is to think aloud.

I once had a very good Geometry teacher. She used different strategies and explanations. She was so cool, that we never even felt stressed on her subject. She used what interested us. She asked me to do research on non-Euclidean Geometry. I did my research. She was amazed I found the answers.

I was in sixth or seventh grade when something unforgettable happened to me. I lead and directed my class for a choral reading competition in Filipino. Our teacher allowed us to organize things on our own. When a German classmate had difficulty pronouncing words, all 30 of us helped him with his Filipino. It was a turning point for everybody. Soon after the competition, everybody joined school clubs and got interested in doing different activities. We were all engaged because we felt no one was excluded; we were all included.

I look back to this moment as a teacher, and realize that what happened to us was actually student-driven. I think it is a crucial concept in children's learning, to let them free to create, to let them be responsible on what they're doing, to trust them enough that they can do on their own. Children become more invested in what they do.

I believe the way students to learn has a lot to do with having a good teacher. The teacher must always have a strong grasp of the subject matter, as well as, pedagogy. Teachers must be able to teach concepts in many ways to different types of learners. One way of teaching may not work for all, but if the teacher is able to mix and match things around and repackage knowledge for students, they can easily understand difficult concepts.

Good teachers are the ones ready to solve learning problems inside the classroom. They should at least notice red flags on every learner's development, so they can specifically attend to their learning needs. The teachers should spend time to do remedial work with the students. The curriculum should also not be ridiculously crammed. A thriving learning community is like a mirror of the outside world. Everyone should have a place because all children have potential.



“

Educating learners with special educational needs under the tutelage of a school team with the heart and love for SPED can definitely transform the school into an inclusive community.

”

Keeping the Fire Burning for SPED

Jupiter Petilla

“I’ll never know what I’ll gonna get till I get it”.

I see my life as a principal the way Forrest Gump sees it. Life surprises me like a box of chocolates.

My story begins in Talogtog-Bateng Elementary School, where I first got interested on SPED (Special Education). There I started to organize a pull-out class for very slow readers, as well as non-readers in the school. We have later classified these children as learners with learning disability. We had no choice but to put up a formal SPED class.

I did the same when I was assigned in Mangaldan, Pangasinan, about 5 hours north of Manila. Here, I spearheaded Mangaldan Integrated School (MIS). Two years later, I helped build the Special Education Center.

When I was first assigned at Mangaldan Integrated School (formerly Bantayan Central School), I saw how special children just loitered in the streets. I also heard some of them were locked up inside their houses because of social stigma. I began to see the great challenge. I thought, if I was able to do it in Talogtog-Bateng, why not here in Mangaldan? I’m inspired by how my

profoundly autistic cousin was able to attend a regular school and apply basic life skills in Canada, where his family migrated. If he can do it, why not these students?

Something paved a way for my vision. Luckily, in 2012, I was accepted as scholar in Organization, Administration and Supervision of Special Education Program (OAS-SPED). This scholarship program is a graduate course of the Department of Education (DepEd) in partnership with the University of Southeastern Philippines. It was intended for selected divisions and schools to help them build skills in setting up and running a SPED program.

DepEd requires each town to have a SPED Center. It will serve as a resource hub for regular teachers to hone their teaching and learning practices for special children. It is a place to replicate tools used in sign language, braille reading, etc. Here in the Philippines, SPED centers have become prime movers of inclusive education, yet they just don't focus alone on children with disabilities and special needs. It also includes out- the out-of school youth/children for the Alternative Learning System, Muslim students, street children, LGBT students, and students who come from broken/displaced families.

Soon after OAS-SPED training, I worked with MIS stakeholders, so we could begin setting up the Center. To drum up interest on the program, we organized a formal launching activity and spread the word via social media. We launched a community mapping activity to identify the children with special needs. We also encouraged parents to enroll them in our school. We only had one SPED teacher at the time, who volunteered to teach 13 students. Today, we already have 75 special needs children, either enrolled in self-contained classes or mainstreamed in regular classes.

The school was soon renamed as Mangaldan Integrated School SPED Center or MIS-SC to emphasize the special education program. I thought I could continue longer in this SPED program, but change came my way. In August 2014, I was reassigned to head a bigger school. Like good soldier, I embraced the challenged, and left my old school.

Then, I was invited back to speak for MIS-SC 2015 graduation rites. It was nostalgic, like meeting an old flame. I felt this longing for my old school. I saw the same longing in the eyes of teachers, parents, guardians, community officials and all the students I taught. While my heart is here, I never thought about coming back.

Things were happening when I moved on: less students enrolled in the program and the quality of teaching became poorer. After a whirlwind of consultations and meetings among all parents, teachers and people involved. They all agreed to bring me back. They wanted an inspiring leader to help them constantly keep the fire burning.

And then the unexpected came. DepEd sent me a letter, about the combined petition of PTA and MIS-SC community to summon me back, it was a rare thing to happen for a principal to be reassigned back to a previous assignment, but it did.

So it was a moment to make a decision. Deep in my heart, I know that I love my special kids, and I missed them. I wanted to serve them more. I put my work with them in my heart and soul. While my heart is like “torn between two lovers” – my former school and my new one, I still had to make the choice.

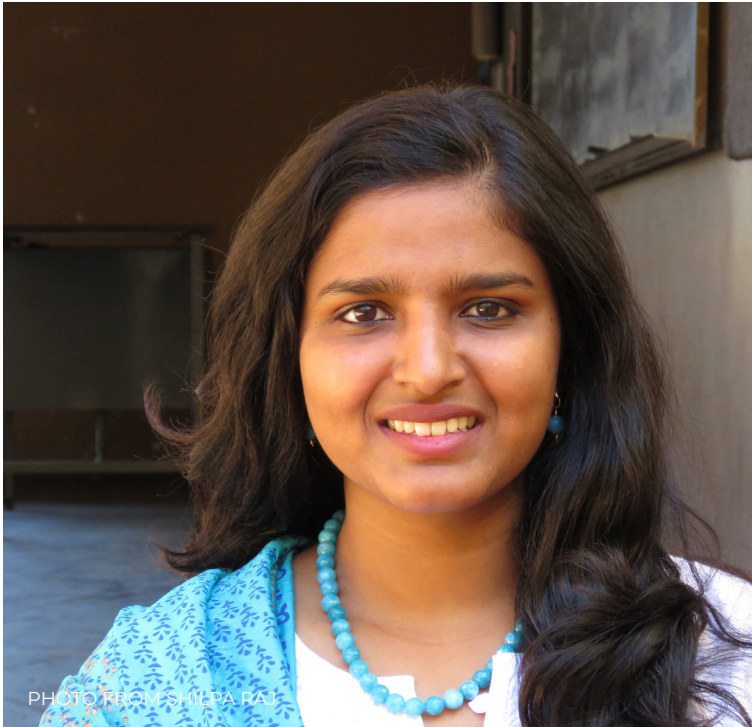
I did. I chose to return.

And I realized one thing in my return: that parents are the most powerful and influential education stakeholders. Right after a huge person with disability awareness campaign we conducted, parents have readily accepted, embraced, and believe every child’s right to education. They slowly let go of their insecurities and finally brought their kids to the SPED Center. With the heart and love for SPED, school teams that educate students with special needs can help transform any school into an inclusive community.

Transforming from an exclusive to inclusive school needs the huge support of the entire community. It involves advocacy campaign through SPED and inclusive education summits and caravans, continuous disability campaigns, child search and find activities through home visitations, assessment of learners with special educational needs, proper placement of special children either in self-contained classes or mainstreamed classes. It also requires tools and equipment to suit every instruction to the needs of children with disabilities. It also implements transition program (technical, vocational and livelihood training) for learners with special education needs who are 14 years old and above. There is also an observance of SPED-related celebrations on a school-wide setting, to initiate a continuous awareness platform for person with disability.

Mangaldan Integrated School SPED Center is successful in introducing inclusive education practices due to creation of shared and inspiring leadership. Whatever is at stake, it is everyone’s responsibility. There is transparency and good governance, particularly in the use of resources, using a strong advocacy and marketing program.

People say that principals can make or break the school. I’m happy to be part of making mine, to live up to HOPE –humility, optimism, passion and advocacy, and engaging leadership. More than how much life surprised me, I am so grateful that my entire community and I are all transformed.



“

Through the empowerment I received from my education, I was able to overcome the limitations of my family's circumstances and find my escape. I now have a voice and the power to aspire.

”

The Elephant Chaser's Daughter

Shilpa Anthony Raj

The daughter of a housemaid and an elephant chaser from a South Indian village, Shilpa Raj's life changed dramatically when she was selected at the age of four to attend Shanti Bhavan, a boarding school for poor children.

Shilpa completed high school with distinction in 2011—the first in her family to do so—and subsequently received a Master's degree in psychological counseling.

Her recently published memoir, *The Elephant Chaser's Daughter*, reveals her story as a young girl confronting her 'untouchable' status in a caste-based society, and her aspirations for modernity and freedom.

At the age of four, my life veered drastically from my family when I got selected to study in Shanti Bhavan, a free boarding school called Arun by an Indian-American philanthropist for children from underprivileged homes. As if a hoodlum torn my family apart on this unexpected news. While my distraught mother fought not to give me up to the care of a total stranger, my father, then a poor, illiterate bootlegger, stubbornly stood by his decision to send me to school, despite being warned by the elders in the village not to trust the generous ways of the rich.

And thus my story began.

Unlike others in my family, I grew up not knowing hunger or want, and enjoyed the comforts of a proper upbringing and a good education in a safe and loving environment. In school, I felt free to study subjects of my choice and to dream big. My teachers and caretakers encouraged me to be curious, to question and to voice my opinions. I was treated as an equal to boys, unlike the women in my village who lived in submission to a patriarchal system.

But during school vacations, I came face to face with the harsh realities experienced by millions of children from India's social underclass. Over the course of my childhood, I struggled to balance between two starkly contrasting worlds in which I existed: one of servitude, injustice and limiting village traditions; and the other of opportunity and individual empowerment.

My desire to embrace modernity and pursue education for a professional career brought me in conflict with the wishes of my family, as they pressured me to marry my mother's younger brother and settle to a simple life with my parents and grandparents in the village. I felt restrained by the expectations of my family and of my community. In my struggle to find my true identity, I often wondered which world I really belonged to.

And just when I finally began to feel that I had found my footing, my younger sister was found dead under unforeseen, mysterious circumstances. Her death shattered whatever stability remained in my life and left me and my family in deep conflict and turmoil.

What brought back a sense of purpose for me was the realization that I had been given a rare and special opportunity through my education, and I could not waste it. I also learnt more about my family and how their lives had been shaped at the hands of poverty and the oppressive caste system that had relegated them for generations to the lowest strata of a rigid, tradition-bound society for centuries in India. I also came to understand why my father, who now makes a living chasing wild elephants from sugarcane plantations in my village, had made the difficult but crucial decision to send me away to school so I could live a life different from his.

I have realized through my schooling at Shanti Bhavan and with the publication of my book that there's nothing more liberating than personal empowerment. I was fortunate to live and study in a school where the staff didn't focus just on teaching me class lessons but took the time to help me develop my personality and instil self-confidence and build strong self-esteem. I wish other children elsewhere benefit from this approach to education, rather than just pushing them to complete school with high scores without an emphasis on holistic personal growth.

15th International Conference

As a woman, the voice I've found through my education, and now as an author, has given me great confidence and courage to continue fighting for what is right and put my talents to good use. I am also committed to serve those who need my assistance, especially in the field of mental health.

No one can take away from me the knowledge and the agency I have gained.



PHOTO FROM SRI IRIANINGSIH AND ROSSYATI

“

Our simple school thrives on providing opportunities to poor but determined and hardworking youth.

”

Twin Mothers: Twin Teachers of the Poor

Irianingsih and Rossyati Sri

Our names are Sri Irianingsih and Sri Rossyati. We are called Rian and Rossy, and we are identical twins, the youngest among 8 siblings. People know us as Ibu Kembar—Twin mothers. And we are teachers, too.

We came from a wealthy family, but our parents, Hadi Suharno and RA Suminah, raised us differently, without spoiling us as kids. Though our father is a nobleman, almost a prince in our community, he lived a life of a teacher. He taught poor children near a train office, where he once worked as a director. He would bring us on a train ride along the railroad slums. As young girls, we first saw in those train rides the realities of life in the city. My mother, on the other hand, was also a teacher. These things we observed in our childhood have made us see the value of teaching. We both dreamed to be teachers, just like our parents.

In 1972, Rian taught reading and writing to rural kids in Lombok island, while Rosy taught in Borneo. We both got involved in teaching poor kids. Later, we worked differently. Rian majored in Psychology and counseled in villages, and later ventured as a real estate entrepreneur. Rosy worked as a medical doctor. Rosy wanted to teach kids, and aspired doing it, so she

started studying Bahasa Indonesia. Until 1990, we both decided to continue teaching kids. With our colleagues, we combined our resources and founded the school we both envisioned.

We called it Sekolah Darurat Kartini—Kartini Emergency School. We named the school after Raden Adjeng Kartini, the well-known Indonesian heroine of Java who pioneered education for young girls and women.

Our school is the only one in Jakarta that teaches to street and poor children. At first, it was not a school with a grand building. We only had a simple tent on a very cramped space under the bridge. In 1990, we first put it up in Jembatan Layang Pluit, North Jakarta along Lodan Raya Street. In the following years, we put the next 4 schools—in Kalijodo prostitution area, Bandengan fishing area, Semper, and Grogol Bridge—all within Jakarta.

Kids in these areas are so poor they could not even afford renting a house. They live in shacks made of plywood and tin roofs. Most of families here live by scavenging, driving motorbikes, and worst, prostituting. So kids could not go to school because of these conditions their parents struggle with. This is why we never charge tuition fee to students. It is free education for all poor children of Jakarta. We combine all classes into a single room and we teach students ourselves. At Kartini, we taught kids basic education. What other public schools teach, we also teach in Kartini.

We quietly provide everything for the school. We never hesitated to spend our own money to pay for all the schoolwork and materials. To finance the school, we opened a special bank account for school's donations. We also receive donations to add up for school supply expenses and the cost of running the school.

Students who come to us to study come from troubled and extremely poor families. Knowing this fact, we shifted into a special strategy in teaching them. We know our students have come from harsh and difficult backgrounds. As teachers, we grow more in patience, for students misbehave a lot.

Our school may be simple and spartan, but it was born out of our great aspiration to ease poverty and ignorance among our students. We have seen over the years of giving possibilities to skilled, struggling, hard-working, and self-sufficient young people. Since the regular education cost is too high, a lot of children drop out of school and struggle to live on the streets. Hence, we continue to teach children.

We have 16 teachers, with one for each subject. Subjects under Kartini's education menu are 60% academics and 40% skills. We teach them required subjects taught in early childhood to high school levels, which all follows the official curriculum of Indonesian Ministry of Education. We also teach them basic and technical skills—such as batik, sewing, embroidery, cooking,

dancing, sports, and so on. We also help them to hone their talents, so they can get the reward from the work they do. We strictly discourage them from begging. We always remind them to work with what they can. For example, we emphasize the importance of hard work when a student who made batik, was able to sell and earned from his products.

In 2007, a big blow hit us. The North Jakarta municipal government wanted to shut our school down, because they did not want schools built up under the bridge. We didn't have any choice but to give in to the orders. Now, the one under the Layang Pluit is no longer there since the time of now President Joko Widodo (Jokowi). Kartini Emergency School was moved to government facility not far from the location. Our mission did not stop there. We believed that sooner we would find the right place to bring back the school. And we have kept on going. The school, originally made of scrap wood and used tarps, has evolved and become sturdy buildings. Today, our children are studying in permanent buildings with a number of learning facilities. The school is a lot better now. It is called Indonesian Academy of Kartini Emergency School.

People and organizations have recognized our efforts. We have received a number of awards and achievements to improve the fate of street children of the nearly lost generation. We have been so both fulfilled by what we do for the children's lives.

There were invitations for us to run into politics, but we do not want to be there. What we want is to improve our school, strategically plan, and build new facilities for students to learn more comfortably. We wish that the government adapts and supports what we have started and creates more schools the way we did. We want to educate the entire nation, not just on the academic side, but on the virtue as well.

We continue to expand Kartini program offerings. Now, we have two 2-year diploma programs—one on cinematography, and the other on journalism. We have chosen these programs as these would help spread word about Kartini's advocacy, and spark deeper hope to the underprivileged children who really want to study and have the chance to do so.

Over the years, Kartini Emergency School has helped thousands of street children. As to numbers, we don't remember how many of them have graduated from our school, but we're sure no one came out immoral or criminal or corrupt. They turned out to be professionals like our teachers, lawyers, and law graduates. A lot of them took regular jobs—policeman, soldiers, even a ship's captain, and hundreds of other young people who got jobs as security guards, cashier, sales promoter, supermarket or office employees.

We don't want to be popular, or to achieve anything, or get many awards and rewards of any kind. We are doing this because of our devotion to teach

kids which gives us so much sense of happiness. Our happiness comes when children come back to meet us, give us a kiss on our hands and say, "Mother, thank you, now I have work and have been helping my family."

It has been 25 years since we started the school. We may not be young anymore, but we feel beautiful and full of spirit at our age, as we keep our meaningful work of educating poor kids. We hope that when we are gone, somebody will continue our work. We hope our school lives on.



PHOTO FROM ROHANIZA SUMNDAD-USMAN

“

We need more changemakers for peace, because we need to create more generations of peace builders, not just for this generation, but for future generations.

”

Princess Warrior for Peace

Rohaniza Sumndad-Usman

In Riyadh, the loudspeakers of mosques dotted across the desert city would simultaneously blare off five times a day. This is for Adhan – the Muslims’ call for prayer. Living in Riyadh, this tremulous chant became our morning alarm clock, calling us for Sub’h.

In early 1990s, when I was mere 7 years old, a different sound bellowed across the cold desert sky from our mosques minarets. It was not the familiar call for worship. No. It was the prolonged wailing of sirens that would wake us up in the middle of the night. There was a missile heading its way to our city.

Being in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War, I realized that no one is too young to experience war. I was really afraid because I didn’t really know what was happening. All I know back then was that there was fighting. And when a SCUD missile dropped near our home, I felt the ground tremble like a thousand earthquakes. The fear never left me.

I recall witnessing my fellow Filipinos displaced because of the Gulf War. Every sound of air raid sirens, every explosion, they all bore to my mind. I know what, and how war is, and I’d find a bit of myself in every child who fears the sound of war. My commitment to peace, my commitment as being a peace educator, would have not been the same if it wasn’t for that experience.

All throughout history, we have witnessed the cause and effect relationship of different conflicts that even led to violence, and these challenging realities have been getting bigger and bigger all throughout the years. And in these challenging realities, the most affected are the children. In fact, about 30,000 to 50,000 children were displaced due to armed conflict every day for 6 years.

Imagine a child, from the moment she was born, surrounded by the sound of bombs and guns. This is the reality for many children in various parts of the world. In today's society, a culture of peace should be the core of humanity in addressing the underlying factors of conflicts such as prejudice, discrimination, and indifference.

Teach Peace Build Peace Movement is a non-profit, nonpartisan, and a non-government organization that has been doing peace building work for children. Our mission is to make every Filipino child and youth as peace builders.

The organization has been spearheading a strategic initiative of running peace education programs for children in both conflict and non-conflict zones. Our guiding principle is that we have to nurture the child's ability to foster peace. The activities of the movement use innovative and creative strategies such as music, arts, games, sports, and service. The institutionalization or normalization of the culture of peace, beginning with children, can break the cycle of conflict, of violence, and transform into a cycle of creating different generations of peace builders.

With everything that has been happening now, our world has been full of conflict and violence, there's a great need for us to build that grand alliance for peace. We are thankful that the organization keeps on growing, both in members and in partners, who are helping us in this journey to building a culture of peace.

In my field, we need more changemakers for peace, because we need to create more generations of peace builders, not just for this generation, but for future generations.



PHOTO FROM ASPBAE

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A learning community thrives when we respect the learner’s dignity, and give them the freedom to make their choices.

”

Shodhini: A Quest for Freedom

Sonali Kailash Tongare

I am a Shodhini, a girl-seeker. That’s the identity we have given to ourselves, girls who do research on our fellow girls. And our work is to help fellow girls to see, speak up and be strong.

In my village called Kochargoan, in Maharashtra, India, people are mostly rice farmers. We struggle together to meet our needs. When rice is not in season, people move to Nashik, a nearby city, or in other towns to work and earn. More than half of the people don’t know how to read and write, and half of them are women.

The girls in our village are not allowed to move around the community, especially when the clock strikes at 7 in the evening. We are not allowed to talk to boys, and we should forget pursuing a romantic relationship with them! Here, there’s so much anxiety that a girl, if forced to marry a boy of her parent’s choice, may run away with a boy she likes to pursue a ‘love marriage’, because the action can bring dishonor to her family. Parents are so afraid that they don’t want this to happen. So they find a match for their daughter, and get them married at a young age. This happened to many of my friends—married without their consent—long before they become adults.

I decided to become a Shodhini. I have become a researcher, seeking and learning more about my fellow girls. Becoming one, I can now see possibilities other than marriage for my future.

My parents wanted me to get married, but I made a deal with them. I insisted that I wanted to complete my high school education. Before I get married, I want to stand on my own feet. They agreed. I postponed my marriage until after I graduate.

As a Shodhini, I have carried out research in our village along with a group of girls as peers. I am part of a Youth-led Action Research (YAR) on girls' education initiated by Abhivyakti Media for Development, an NGO based in Nashik, India in partnership with ASPBAE.

We introduce to girls what we do and ask them questions about education. We have learned more about their situations in their families, analyze, and interpret data. From here, we document our stories, and help them with solutions.

In doing action research, I was able to develop three 3 'V's, both on the personal level, and my community: Vision, Voice and Valor.

Vision

My fellow Shodhinis and I have reached out to other village's girls using the action research process. We were able to understand their reality through the lenses of poverty, powerlessness and patriarchy. I have realized that the a girls' life could be transformed if they start to speak up to their families, and share them her dreams of fulfilling the work, partner, and capacities she chooses for herself. Now, I understand that my life is my own and not dependent on my 'fate'.

Voice

I once delivered a 10-minute speech before a large audience in Mumbai. I spoke about my experiences of doing the action-research and findings of our work. This was one of my best, and most life-changing moment. I spoke to public in behalf of all Shodhinis. I gave a speech with so much confidence and clarity. People in the audience, even special guests, congratulated me right after.

One of the guests was an well-known local actress. Later in the evening, she came to me and praised my message and my efforts. I felt so proud of what I did. I was able to overcome the anxiety of delivering a good speech. And I was also the youngest in our team, but still I managed to speak clearly about our demands as young people!

Valor

Girls matters less in our community, and their opinions hardly matter. As Shodhinis, we have faced so much hostilities. People questioned our work and motives. Boys constantly taunted us. Our own families found it hard to believe our intentions and didn't understand what research meant.

It was hard for me to deal with such people in the community. I was so tense, and sometimes unbearable. It was tough and traumatic, and it took a toll on me. It worsened when I lost my sister to suicide. We never knew what made her do it. But I think by becoming a Shodhini, I would be able to discover it.

Doing the action research process means going beyond one's comfort zone and confronting our fears. Together with the other girls, I continued to attend action research workshops and even participated actively in them. It also meant meeting 100 girls of my age from my village to collect their data. I also met with our community leaders to solicit their support. I talked to the Gram Panchayat (Village Council) members to demand safer village spaces for girls to move around with freedom.

Our own actions!

We are a young group of Shodhinis. We now have an identity. We have gained the respect of our community. In our families, the elders/parents now ask us for our opinions on important matters. Last year, during the Women's Day celebrations, we met the Sarpanch (Head of the Village) and shared our concerns. The girls had never visited the Gram Panchayat office until now. But on the Womens Day (8 March 2017) we asked the Sarpanch to hold a women-only Gram Sabha (Village Assembly). While the village officials don't have the energy in doing a Gram Sabha, we visited the houses and invited the women to attend the Gram Sabha exclusively for women. Here, they aired their concerns, suggestions and ideas to improve their participation in village development. Not many women turned up, but those who did witnessed a historic occasion. We young girls rose in unison and spoke about our many concerns to the Gram Panchayat officials, one about safety and the other about early marriage.

We then presented a map to our village officials, marking red the spaces we felt unsafe. The Gram Panchayat officials along with the rest of the villagers were so surprised to see red-dotted map and our confidence to speak our truth. The Sarpanch promised action, and later in a public function he even spoke against the practice of early marriages of girls without their consent. Early marriage has been the scourge of many girls and young women, especially in rural India, and there are no easy answers. However, we Shodhinis have started realizing the need to speak up, and to talk to their families about delaying early marriages.

As a Shodhini, I have realized that learning should be based on an individual's interest. Most schools deny learners this choice. Learners are forced to learn what others think is right for them. I discovered this through the action research process: workshops were paced according to the learners' abilities, giving them so much freedom to learn. The context should not be alien, and must relate to the learner's life. A learning community thrives when we respect learner's dignity, and give them the freedom to make their choices.

To understand things not just on the surface, but on its depth, in the very root of it. To dig deeper. This is the true work of a Shodhini. I am Sonali, and this is my work.



PHOTO FROM UST SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S FACEBOOK PAGE

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An academic setting can be very inclusive and transformative if the teacher believes in you as a learner. In my classes, I never felt judged; I never felt rejected.

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Healing and Advocacy through Education

Prescilla Tulipat

I survived incest. I was once hurt, traumatized, and betrayed. And I don't want this to happen to anyone. Despite this, my life is still a journey of strength, courage, and healing. I believe it is also about every person who survived the same. I am Prescilla Tulipat, and this is my story.

In 1987, after graduating from the University of the Philippines (UP) Development Studies program, I took a job at the Development Academy of the Philippines. Here, I applied my skills by crafting training modules for local government officials. From there, I joined the then UP College of Public Administration for a project on the 1987 local elections. It was the most exciting job I ever had. I traveled from one province to another, interviewing local officials, church people, military and legislators (national and local). At the same time, we were also doing a research on women legislators. This first ignited my interest in women studies.

I wanted to learn more about women and politics. During this time, I enrolled in a pioneering course on women and development, first offered at the UP College of Social Work and Community Development (CSWCD). I had no

idea that my eagerness to enroll in this program would lead me later to heal my past. I was a five-year-old child when I was abused. For nearly twenty years I carried the burden and trauma with me. When a professor of mine asked the class on the highest and lowest points of our lives, my memory brought me back to the darkest days of my childhood. I broke down. And I opened up.

From then on, I found the courage to confront, study, and understand what exactly happened to me. I began to slowly regain my center. It started my journey to healing. And I vowed to expose incest in public. I have become successful in doing that.

I began learning about different women and gender issues. Through my subject on feminist counseling, I have learned and reflected so much about my childhood years. I got to explore and study theories and discourses on abuse and violence against women and children (VAWC). My professors and classmates provided me with the opportunities and tools to discuss, learn, theorize, and express my emotions. Academic setting, I realize, can be very inclusive and transformative if the teacher believes in you as a learner, as a person who can meaningfully contribute insights and learning. In my classes, I was never judged and I never felt judged. I never felt rejected. I began to value the experience of sharing, reflecting and being a part of a supportive and sensitive group.

I was 29 when I wrote my graduate thesis about the dynamics and nature of incest. I began speaking out about mine and other's experience of abuse, hoping to help more Filipinos, especially women, understand the issue. In this study, 18 women and incest survivors bravely underwent group counseling. I also got involved in women's organizations, particularly with the former Women's Resource and Research Center. My colleagues generously supported my study. We formed a cluster on incest, five members of which were survivors of incest. I have personally witnessed how incest hits the core of many women survivors, how it makes them less productive, and how it erodes their self-esteem. Incest is surrounded by a culture of silence, which makes it a taboo, a rule imposed on by family members to the victim in order to keep the family "intact." And yet, it is this silence that ruins them.

We also opened these discussions to other survivors coming from the Women's Crisis Center (WCC). We studied theories, discussed concepts, and bared our emotions as we all tried to make sense of our lived experiences. And we also did some research and training among prostituted women and women workers. This experience eventually challenged me to look into the connection of incest and prostitution. This led me to reflect back on my college years, when I met several classmates who were sexually abused.

As a Teacher

I have trained and educated rural women. I also taught psychology and research part-time at the Philippine Normal University (PNU). I always cherish the gifts I have been given as a teacher: the gift of students, of gratitude from them, and of being a mentor to some. In fact, I was deeply touched by one student who told everyone I am her mentor.

After that short stint, I went up to the mountains of Tanay, Rizal to teach barefoot doctor-students. I introduced to them a variety of women and gender health issues. I learned the art of community organizing. In my classes where students spoke in their local language, I taught them the use of Filipino, our national language. At the time, I was the only resident teacher who stayed in this place despite having no electricity and computer. I walked long distances just to be able to bring to the indigenous people the health information and services they need.

Eventually, I had to quit this challenging work to attend more to my family's needs. But later I got a research and teaching job at the Institute of Spirituality in Asia. This job came to me at the right time, when I was in search for answers to a spiritual question I was asking: how come I was able to inflict a violent act towards a person I love? I found in this work how spirituality can become a driving force for men and women who do full-time community work and why some resort to development NGO work afterwards.

Being a Counselor

I worked as a crisis counselor and advocacy officer at the WCC. Using feminist counseling, I was helping those people, mostly women, who suffered battering and rape. We put up a national referral network where we can refer cases anywhere in the country. This facilitated our work as helpers of women. From there, I realized we cannot simply attend to individual cases of women. We also need to see the root cause of these cases, embedded in the unequal power relationship between men and women at the personal, social, and community levels.

I also worked in WomanHealth Philippines, where I am still an active member. Here, I found and appreciated the connection between personal health and national health issues. I since then used the comprehensive framework which we adopted to view women's health. This remains relevant to me up to now as I still use it in my counseling work.

I'm a woman, and a lesbian. Being both led me and my work to reflect and speak about the many issues and frameworks concerning LGBTs. Together with my colleagues at The Lesbian Collective (TLC), I have worked on exploring and understanding LGBT concerns. Conversations on issues and topics salient to us have long enriched my experience.

Peacework

On a personal level, it dawned on me that a counselor can also be violent, especially with a partner who triggers past memories. At some point in my life, I needed to go to a far place to thresh out this paradoxical truth. In Mindanao, I found a university with a course on peace building, where I also taught guidance and psychology and at the same time reflected on the reasons why a 'victim can also become a perpetrator.' I started learning and studying about being violent and violence in general. Fortunately, I was awarded a scholarship on a Gender and Peacebuilding course in Costa Rica. Here, I learned more deeply about the roots and dynamics of personal and societal violence, as well as the frameworks, strategies and techniques in addressing this. I did my internship in Indonesia because I wanted to know how a men's program is being run inside a Women's Crisis Centre. At present, I am applying what I have learned in my MA Women and Development, and Gender and Peacebuilding courses to our counselling program at the UP Diliman Gender Office (UPDGO) where I now work as a guidance counsellor.

Insights from Doing Women and Development Work

I now look at things within a more expansive or comprehensive frame. I learned to connect personal issues to bigger societal issues and, from there, create interventions at the personal, community and societal levels. I can also apply the gender lens in every issue. I realized that being a survivor of incest had nothing to do with my lesbian identity. Being a lesbian is a personal, empowering choice by itself. As a crisis counselor, I began to appreciate the hurdles every woman has to overcome just to be able to free herself individually before she can work in a bigger sphere of life. I learned how to listen and to listen well. I can also engage in emotional matters without being drained. I strongly believe that engaging with emotions, not just the intellect and cognition, is an integral part of a thriving learning environment.

I advocate for institutionalized mechanisms for survivors of gender-based violence and discrimination, that are able to help them process the experience, seek justice, and not victimize them many times over. More importantly, I became convinced that I have to work with men to be able to address VAWC effectively, knowing that while men are often the perpetrators of VAWC, they can also be engaged as potential agents of change. This last realization was a big departure from my earlier stance where all my energies were spent on working with women. My experiences and reflections have also led me to believe that discourses on violence committed against men and LGBTs need to be enriched even more.

The expansive and inclusive framework I use in analyzing women and gender issues helped me avoid cynicism and getting burned out. I see the dots of life connected and interrelated to all issues. In fact, I am looking at

spirituality as deeply connected with sexuality and women. This viewpoint enables me to help women reclaim their wholeness despite being battered or raped. At this point in my life, I constantly nourish my spiritual well so that I can have something to share with my counselees. I exercise physically and spiritually so that I can appreciate life wholly and fully. I now recognize that I cannot possibly live with ideology alone; I need comprehensive and expansive frameworks to understand life across time, space, and cultures.

My Work's Deeper Meaning

My counseling work is so meaningful to me. Whenever I see the person I help through counseling overcome the harshness of life and smile once again, I feel more fulfilled. Even if people say that counselors do one-on-one work and do not impact many people, I always feel satisfied touching each life I encounter. It is my best contribution to make our society much better.

As to my work as an educator/teacher, a researcher, a counselor, and an advocate for women, I regard all of these as important steps towards realizing my dream of a violence-free society. These become even more challenging and fulfilling whenever I mentor young women and men who become deeply interested in gender and peace work.

I conclude that development, to be more meaningful, must touch each person's life: psychologically, spiritually, economically, and in other aspects of being human. I have realized this throughout my life journey, as I have engaged more with people of different ages, from different places, cultures, and genders. I hope each person can cherish the richness and diversity of life, so as to live and leave this Earth carrying the true treasures in one's heart.



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I want to be the school leader who continues to help students to become responsible individuals for the nation and the church.

”

The Courage to Learn

Sr. Francelina Ximenes Freitas, FdCC

I am a Timorese. I am a missionary belonging to the Canossian Daughters of Charity, Servants of Poor. In the span of 20 years, I had been the headmaster of two Catholic high schools, before and after Timor-Leste's independence: one in Manatuto, and another a Canossian high school in Dili.

My country, Timor-Leste, is a small in terms of land size, about 15,000 square kilometres. We only have a million people in population, mostly Catholic. We were known then as Portuguese Timor until the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) declared independence in November 1975. But, nine days later, Indonesian government saw our country as a threat and occupied us as its province. At this time, so much violence had happened between the Timorese separatist groups and the Indonesian military.

In 1997 I was first transferred to Manatuto, one of the 13 towns in Timor Leste. It was the hardest time for me and for everyone in the country. I became the headmaster of St. Anthony Senior High School, even though I felt I was not yet ready. I was just a plain religion teacher at the time. I was clueless on how to run a school and lead teachers (mostly Indonesians) who are older and more experienced than me. I humbly confront all these challenges. I spent the next 6 months learning the ropes from my fellow teacher, and from my own experience.

It was really a difficult time. In the middle of a challenging political situation, Timorese students suffer persecution from Indonesian soldiers. We began to welcome students expelled from other schools, Most of the students, particularly the boys, wanted to join the guerilla movement. We welcomed them all, especially the persecuted ones and took them into safety.

I engaged all people in the school to harmonize and collaborate. I tried to find ways to increase teacher's salary, and complete teaching materials needed for each class. I strived to make classrooms as spaces of learning for Indonesian and Timorese children to peacefully study together. I am proud and happy of facilitating this. But all these problems were too small compared to what we experienced after.

It was a dark time for Timor-Leste, between 1997 and 1999. The country was then a few steps toward its independence. It was the time when the Indonesian military killed people and burned down all school buildings. But in October 1999, with the United Nation's help, Indonesia finally lost its grip on Timor-Leste. Sadly, skilled Indonesian teachers left us, leaving behind most Timorese volunteer teachers unprepared. When independence finally came, we all began again to rebuild our country despite limited resources.

Still, I was grateful that we were able to slowly rebuild our school. With great energy and joy in their hearts, local volunteer teachers helped us make a fresh start. They worked even without pay for the next two months. Sooner, I would take in solutions to give them sufficient salary and pay them on time. I also nurtured relationship and connection with both parents and students. I encouraged and engaged students more to actively participate in the teaching-learning process in school. I connected and collaborated with the local church, my congregation's leaders and with the government's education ministry.

And then after independence in 2002, I faced another challenge. I became the headmaster of the Catholic school of Saint Magdalena of Canossa at this time. I am a Canossian sister, and this school is under our congregation. While we must strongly pay attention to serve the poor, most of our students come from rich families, with parents affording to pay as much as US\$200 to US\$300 every year. But we still open our doors to both the poor and the rich, prudently treating them equally, regardless of their economic capacity. Whether a student is poor or rich, nobody is treated differently.

My experiences as the headmaster of both school were incredible. Both shaped my courage, humility and creativity. I have become a leader open to continuous learning. I have learned to exercise participatory leadership. With these learning experiences, I have grown both as a Canossian sister and as a human being.

I have learned to serve people, both the less fortunate and the fortunate ones. I love this life of developing the talents and interests of my students, to inspire them to study more and transform their future lives. I have witness a great contrast of my experiences, but one thing I know is that I have learned to respect and love my students as human beings, regardless of their status or life situation.

For the poor and the persons with disability

Our school has design approaches to accommodate both the poor students and those people with disability. We don't ask families to pay full tuition fee in cash. Most of them are poor and lack the ability to make money out of what they have. Instead of students paying money, we ask them to pay for what they can. There were parents who paid livestock like cattle, goat or pig, once a year; farmer parents paid crops like corn and rice. Students usually do not know this arrangement on their school fees. Instead, it is always between the parents and the school.

We also receive students with physical disability in our school, so they can catch up with the regular schooling. Some come in wheelchairs, and classes are done in the ground floor for their easy access. I am always touched by their willingness to learn, just like any regular student. They have developed deep friendships with fellow students, too. For example, at a time when one multimedia class was in the second floor, a student in wheelchair was carried upstairs by his friends to attend class once every week. They did this for 3 years!

Parents and teachers help together for the school to thrive. Priest and nuns help around to seek for financial solutions for the school. Social organizations, social ministries and education ministries help us too, in terms of financial and organizational support.

Success in this work is not what I feel, but by those who have felt it through my work. I am driven to do this work because of the courage to sacrifice, to love as God loves us, to be humble and open enough to learn continuously from every person I meet and every event I encounter. To improve myself through the endeavors I had, the books I read, and the things I learn in the field of education. And, to nurture good relationships with people around me.

I praise God to see students, however poor and physically disabled, succeed at school. About 90 percent of them continue their studies in college or universities.

I want to help the children more, so in the future they can develop the value of thinking for the welfare of others. This is the goal of Children and

Adolescents missionary in this Catholic diocese. I want to be the school leader who continue to help students to become responsible individuals for the nation and the church.

I'd like to borrow the words of Spanish novelist Miguel de Cervantes: "He who loses his wealth, loses much; he who loses a friend, loses more; but who loses his courage, loses all." I believe God has always accompanied me, my school, and all the people I worked with through the most difficult situations and times. This is the story of our courage.



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As I look back, I remember how it all started: my thirst for knowledge and my passion to learn.

”

A Young Farmer's Dream

Elnard Ympal

It all started with a piece of paper I received one morning: TESDA offered me a short-term scholarship. I took the chance and studied Agricultural Technical Vocational Course. I never thought that one day, this choice would eventually bring a big difference in my life.

I grew up in Siquijor Island. Like every youth in my town, I wanted to finish my studies and find a job. But my family had no means. College was too expensive for us. I felt I had no choice, until one day it changed when TESDA scholarship came my way. My 2-year studies were a big sacrifice for me and my family. At the time I could not help in our small farm. Every day, I had to walk 5 kilometers going to TESDA center and back home. My family never stopped supporting me despite our struggles. And I never stop searching for knowledge. I seek where learning can be found.

Then in 2005, I successfully completed the program and got my National Competency Level II (NCII). Excited, I started to apply what I learned. In our small, uphill farm, I planted corn, cabbage, carrots, string beans, squash, corn, banana and cut flowers. With only PhP500 (about US \$10),

Then a serious drought dried up our land. My plants wilted and died. I couldn't let this happen. I told myself, "I need to do something about this."

An idea came to me: I used empty one-liter soda pet bottles. I cut the bottom of each bottle and suspend it above the seedbed like a long pail. The bottle's mouth faces down, and I attached a long line of nylon rope down to seedbed. I would fill these bottles with water, and the water drips slowly to the ground.

This became the improvised drip irrigation, a solution I came up with to provide a continuous, but efficient water supply for plants. But the idea was not as easy as it looks. I needed to go down to get water, carry it up, and go down again to get more. And I spilled more water than I use to water plants—a waste I could not afford in this drought.

After a week of testing my idea, something happened. The idea worked! My farm turned green again. Leaves sprouted well. I could not describe the happiness I felt, I was just so happy.

I never thought that all these improvisations would become innovations!

The word started to spread. People heard about what I'm doing. They started to come to me to ask for my help. I was happy to help them. The news reached the Provincial Agricultural Office, and sooner they visited our farm. They were so amazed. I, too, felt amazed. Perhaps, for some reasons, I was doing something good.

It was 2006, the same year that I got luckier. I received a nomination for Outstanding Young Farmer. And I brought home the awards, both for provincial and regional levels. But life does not stop on these awards. I kept on learning, tried new strategies, and test opportunities. I introduced and experiments on new innovations and discoveries I made in our farm. I designed a trap for fruit flies. I put up native trellis using string beans, cucumber and ampalaya. I started using organic matter as fertilizer. I came up with my own pesticide formula using organic herbs and plants available in the area. I also ventured into raising cattle and goats to add up to our income.

I also realized the importance of joining farming groups. I first joined 4H Club , and later I was elected as its Provincial Federated President. So, I got another chance to learn more farming strategies from my fellow farmers, and in turn share them what I know. I also had the privilege to travel abroad. I broadened my knowledge on integrated farming. All these, have deepen my love for farming!

I am thankful for the good harvests, for all the fruits of my hard work and patience. So, I thought of paying it forward: by turning my farm into a learning center. I partnered with the Siquijor's Agricultural Office to start up this project. Here at our farm, young people with interest in farming can stay and learn practical, hands-on farming.

From then on, I begin to receive numerous recognitions. In 2007, former President Gloria Arroyo awarded me the National Outstanding as Young Farmer. I received farm tools and cash award, which I then used to bring more improvements in our farm. Three years after, Siquijor government hailed me as the Regional Outstanding Young Farmer, Outstanding Farmer Scientist in the Province of Siquijor, and the National Outstanding Award as Young Farmer for the second time, which I received from then President Benigno Aquino III.

I got more inspired to learn and search greater opportunities to improve not just our farm, but also my community. I use what I earn to send my siblings to school. And my parents have continued to support me in my work as a farmer.

I may never had a college degree I dreamed before, but I got so much more than that. I am blessed with people, institutions and fellow farmers who are ready to help and support a young farmer like me. As I look back, I remember how it all started: my thirst for knowledge and my passion to learn.

Today I dream a different dream: to see more and more young people value and do the farmer's noble work. For them to find the deep importance of agriculture, not just a producer of the food we eat, but a deep source of living and life.



PHOTO FROM RAE MARTIN PEDROSA

“

Typhoon Yolanda broke almost everything in Eastern Visayas with its super-strength—homes, churches, schools, businesses—but it wasn't strong enough to break the resolve of the people in the region.

”

Homeless but Not Hopeless

Luisa Yu

Typhoon Yolanda broke almost everything in the Eastern Visayas with its super-strength – homes, churches, schools, businesses – but it wasn't strong enough to break the resolve of the people in the region.

Some 50% of elementary schools and 57% of secondary schools in the five divisions of Region 8 were hardest hit. In total, around 50% or 840 out of 1,665 schools were affected; 6,018 classrooms were partially damaged; and 1,567 were totally destroyed.

When a single student under our care passes away, we cry. Can you imagine the heartbreak when 292 students, one education program specialist, one school head, 21 teachers, and seven non-teaching personnel die in one quick stroke? What gave us the strength to get back on our feet was the image of over 250,000 students scattered all over the region who needed to see a sign that things would be okay and life would go on. Although the Department of Education Regional Office was almost completely brought down by Typhoon Yolanda, we were determined to make the school the sign that recovery was happening, and that life was moving back to normalcy. We had to muster all the strength that we could to rebuild the schools because the children couldn't wait.

To move things forward amid the destruction and uncertainty, we, at the Regional Office used an interim education headquarters in Baybay, Leyte until December 9, 2013. The regional training centers could not have been used because they have been declared totally damaged. Makeshift tents using tarpaulins and GI sheets were used instead.

As a regional director of the Department of Education, my first move after the storm surge was to check on the status of the regional office. While the devastation and deaths that greeted me all over was depressing, it was heart-warming to see how other regional staff who survived the disaster braved the long and difficult walk on the streets that used to be so familiar but are now hardly recognizable with the dead and the survivors amid heaps and heaps of debris. Though we were a very small group, we started finding and locating other staff, school heads, and teachers to obtain data on our schools and students.

To serve as a model in moving forward after the typhoon, the regional officers and staff started cleaning at the office every day. A series of Management Committee Meetings at the regional level were held immediately after the typhoon while the superintendents, in turn, conducted their own meetings and informed their divisions that the direction was to resume classes as soon as possible. No less than the Department of Education Secretary Armin Luistro and central office officials visited the schools and led in the cleaning and clearing operations. This ability of the Department of Education to be the first to respond strongly motivated everyone to start all over again.

The DepED Regional Office promoted school feeding to encourage learners to go back to school. Learners were provided one meal a day three times a week. There were three feeding methods used: (1) Cash was given to parents to buy commodities and cook for the children. This approach, however, was not appropriate in some communities. (2) Uncooked rice was given for all the students to take home to their families after class. (3) Champorado or chocolate rice porridge with vitamin-infused chocolate was served in schools.

Hygiene kits consisting of soap, toothpaste, and toothbrush were also provided. Each family was given a bath towel, a pail, and a basin.

Recognizing that the resumption of school activities would provide the community a sense of normalcy, a soft launching for the resumption of classes was held on December 2, 2013. All teachers were required to be in school. While some of them lost family members, a small matter to lament about was that the storm surge also destroyed their make-up kits and washed away their school uniforms and decent clothes. Knowing what the teachers needed, we at the Regional Office gathered donations of teacher uniforms. To complete the package, a beauty product company donated lipsticks and make-up kits. This completed the teachers' preparations for standing with a smile before their students. On January 6, 2014, classes officially re-opened.

By January 15, 2014, 74% or 259,894 out of 353,354, elementary students and 78% or 98,220 out of 125,325 secondary students have gone back to school. The decrease in number was due to the human casualties and the migration and transfer of the students to Metro Manila or to Cebu.

In holding classes during the emergency situation, a contextualized curriculum was adopted by the Department of Education. A mix of contextualized curriculum and K to 12 especially for grades 1, 2, 3, 7, and 8 were used. The regular curriculum was used for those whose school buildings were not badly damaged.

This emergency situation made us realize that international donors are ready to help during emergencies and that the regional officers should learn how to lead them. Some donors look for small schools while others want to donate specific items to all the schools. The important thing is to provide them data on what the schools really need.

The disaster situation showed one more time the resiliency of the Filipinos—from children who made hammocks out of dead electrical wires to community leaders who still managed to console and help other people even if they were survivors themselves.

Talking about resiliency reminds me of this incident about an interview conducted by a foreign correspondent with one female school head. The interviewer asked the school head to cry but she wouldn't. The reporter got angry because the school head kept smiling. The school head said, "Why do you want me to cry when my smile is the only thing left by Yolanda? We may be homeless, but we are not hopeless."



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