

SCHOOL-BASED ROADMAP FOR UN 2030 EDUCATION AGENDA FOCUSED ON PROVIDING INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE AND GENDER EQUALITY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

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ABSTRACT : *The UN 2030 Education Agenda is a global platform directed towards creating opportunities for children with disabilities for their holistic development and eventual mainstreaming in the society. The school being the catalyst of societal transformation is the focal point for provision of instruction and intervention that emphasize inclusion, equity and gender equality among learners. School policies, programs and activities must be crafted to address mainstreaming of children with disabilities that will prepare them for self-independence and enhancement while ensuring that gender bias and bullying is eliminated, thus creating a wholesome school-wide environment. The objectives of this paper stressed on the level of awareness of the goals of UN 2030 Education Agenda, degree of effectiveness of initiatives and activities for implementation, degree of seriousness of the problems that hinder implementation and the plan of action reflected as a school-based roadmap to achieve sustainable development. Descriptive-analytical method of research was employed with survey-questinnaire as its data-gathering instrument. Respondents were teachers and stakeholders of the school. From the data gathered, it was concluded that respondents have very high awareness of the goals of UN 2030 education agenda, the initiatives and activities to be undertaken were perceived very much effective while the problems to be encountered are moderately serious. The findings indicated that the principal should keep track of the activities being implemented to ensure alignment with the goals, stakeholders must work collaboratively to intensify implementation of the school-based initiatives and activities and that doable and effective solutions must be thought of to address and minimize the problems encountered. Thus, the principal in unison with the teachers and stakeholders must religiously implement the plan of action to ascertain fulfillment of the goals set of providing inclusive, equitable and gender equality education for children with disabilities at Mangaldan Integrated School Special Education Center.*

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Equitable Education, Gender Equality and Children with Disabilities

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It came into force during the UN Summit in New York on September 25-27, 2015. It was adopted by UN member countries as stakeholders that seeks to build on the gains of Millennium Development Goals and complete what has not been attained. There are 17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets which are deemed critically important and indispensable requirements in the attainment of

sustainable development where no one be left behind (UN 2015).

For its education agenda, it was succinctly spelled out in goals 4 and 5 that inclusive and equitable education that promote lifelong learning opportunities for all and achievement of equality and empowerment of all women and girls, respectively are of primordial concern (UN 2015). It is a global platform directed towards creating opportunities for all including children with disabilities for their holistic development and eventual mainstreaming in the

society (Dizon et al., 2012). The school being the catalyst of societal transformation is the focal point for provision of instruction and intervention that emphasizes inclusion, equity and gender equality among learners. School policies, programs and activities must be crafted to address mainstreaming of special needs children that will prepare them for self-independence and enhancement while ensuring that gender bias and bullying is eliminated, thus creating a wholesome school-wide environment.

Inclusive education is concerned with all learners with a focus on those who have traditionally been excluded from educational opportunities such as learners with special needs and disabilities, children from ethnic and linguistic communities (UNESCO 2001). It is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all students learn and participate together (Inclusion BC 2012). It usually impinges on human rights, dignity, and equalization of opportunities. It is the process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering its curricular organization and provision. Through this process, the school builds capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend and, in so doing, reduces the need to exclude pupils (Handbook on Inclusive Education DECS 1998).

Equitable Education is the means to achieving equality. It intends to provide the best opportunities for all students to achieve their full potential and act to address instances of disadvantage which restrict educational achievement. It involves special treatment/action taken to reverse the historical and social disadvantages that prevent learners from accessing and benefiting from education on equal grounds (UNESCO 2015).

Gender equality is a global priority and inextricably linked to its efforts to promote the right to education and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 4 and SDG 5 through the Education 2030 Framework for Action. Gender inequality in education affects both girls and boys, and women and men, but girls and women are still more often disadvantaged (UNESCO 2015).

Children with disabilities are one of the most marginalized and excluded groups in society. Facing daily discrimination in the form of negative attitudes, lack of adequate policies and legislation, they are effectively barred from realizing their rights to healthcare, education, and even survival. They are less likely to attend school, access medical services, or have their voices heard in society. Their disabilities also place them at a higher risk of physical abuse, and often exclude them from receiving proper nutrition or humanitarian assistance in emergencies (UNICEF 1989).

Mangaldan Integrated School Special Education Center located in Barangay (village) Bantayan, Municipality (town) of Mangaldan in the Province of

Pangasinan, Philippines implements inclusive education. It caters educational needs of both regular and special children. Children with disabilities are first provided with relevant instruction in self-contained classes in order to prepare them for mainstreaming in regular classes. Through appropriate instructional strategies and devices and implementation of various programs, cognitive, affective and physical attributes of children were being developed. They learn together in an inclusive classroom and school environments where discrimination is not allowed. It is in the context of having all children to learn together wherever possible regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have (UNESCO 1994) and the principles of EFA (education for all) that the school has derived its vision and mission to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults and bring out equal opportunities for all learners.

The concept of mobilizing efforts to realize a worldwide transformation of creating a culture of inclusive and equitable education and achievement of gender equality is an inspiring agendum that the school has to undertake being at the forefront of the educative process. As a paraphrase to the famous statement of Neil Armstrong during the historic landing on the moon that this initiative is a small step for a school, a giant leap for the world. The school, which is at the grassroots level lays down the foundation of a good future for all children. The formative years are delegated for the development of concepts, skills and competencies inside a battlefield which is called - classroom.

This research paper is conceptualized for the purpose of coming up with a proposal, a plan of action for implementation geared towards the attainment of a school where children with disabilities are educated alongside with the regular students for life-long learning, accorded equal treatment, provided activities suited to their capabilities and more importantly, establish a welcoming environment for all types of learners. It focused on determining factors contributory to the school-based implementation of UN 2030 Education Agenda focused on inclusive, equitable and gender equality education for children with disabilities. In particular, it dealt on the following specific problems;

- i. level of awareness of teachers and stakeholders of the goals of UN 2030 Education Agenda on inclusive, equitable and gender equality education;
- ii. degree of effectiveness of school initiatives and activities to implement inclusive, equitable and gender equality education in the school;
- iii. degree of seriousness of the problems that will hinder implementation of inclusive,

- equitable and gender equality education; and
- iv. plan of action to implement inclusive, equitable and gender equality education for children with disabilities.

inclusive, equitable and gender equality education for children with disabilities.

METHOD: Descriptive-analytical method of research is employed in this paper. It determined extensively the awareness of inclusive, equitable and gender equality education among teachers and stakeholders, effectiveness of school initiatives and activities to be undertaken, seriousness of problems that hinder implementation and the plans of action to implement the UN 2030 Education Agenda.

Content:

The proponent believes that in order to develop a plan of action that will serve as roadmap in the school-based implementation of UN 2030 Education Agenda focused on providing inclusive, equitable and gender equality education for children with disabilities, conduct of a research is necessary. Generation of data as to the level of awareness of teachers on the goals of education agenda, degree of effectiveness of school initiatives and activities to be implemented and degree of seriousness of the problems that will be encountered will be beneficial in conceptualizing measures to implement programs to actualize an

The researcher developed and utilized a survey-questionnaire as a data-gathering instrument. It was floated/ administered to the target participants which is composed of selected teachers and some stakeholders. Validation of survey questionnaire was likewise carried out.

The following relative values were used to determine the level of awareness of the objective of inclusive, equitable and gender equality education

Statistical Limit	Relative Value	Descriptive Equivalent	Symbol
4.21 – 5.00	5	Very High Awareness	VHA
3.41 – 4.20	4	High Awareness	HA
2.61 – 3.40	3	Moderate Awareness	MoA
1.81 – 2.60	2	Slight Awareness	SA
1.00 – 1.80	1	No Awareness	NA

The following relative values were used to determine the degree of effectiveness of school initiatives and activities to implement inclusive, equitable and gender equality education in the school.

Statistical Limit	Relative Value	Descriptive Equivalent	Symbol
4.21 – 5.00	5	Very Much Effective	VME
3.41 – 4.20	4	Much Effective	ME
2.61 – 3.40	3	Moderately Effective	MoE
1.81 – 2.60	2	Slightly Effective	SE
1.00 – 1.80	1	Not Effective	NE

The following relative values were used to determine the degree of seriousness of the problems that will hinder implementation of inclusive, equitable and gender equality education.

Statistical Limit	Relative Value	Descriptive Equivalent	Symbol
4.21 – 5.00	5	Very Much Serious	VME
3.41 – 4.20	4	Much Serious	MS
2.61 – 3.40	3	Moderately Serious	ME
1.81 – 2.60	2	Slightly Serious	SE
1.00 – 1.80	1	Not Serious	NS

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1.81 – 2.60	2	Slightly Serious	SE
1.00 – 1.80	1	Not Serious	NS

After the floating of survey-questionnaire to the respondents, retrieval and tabulation of responses followed. Analyses and interpretation processed data were undertaken by the proponent which led to the drawing of conclusions that included significant findings and recommendations on the research completed. A plan of action that will serve as a roadmap for the eventual implementation of school initiatives and activities was also indicated herein.

Significant Findings:

The following data which were presented in tabular form are the salient findings of this research initiative paper;

Question 1: What is the level of awareness of teachers and stakeholders of the goals of UN 2030 Education Agenda on inclusive, equitable and gender equality education ?

There was very high awareness of the goals of UN Education Agenda among teachers and stakeholders of Mangaldan Integrated School SPED Center as indicated by the average weighted mean of 4.421. Table 1 presents the facts and details relative to this analysis.

Specifically, the goal on ensuring that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development (x=6.64) elicited very high awareness among respondents while that of ensuring that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and equality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes (x=4.58) yielded very high awareness. Similarly, the goal of eliminating all forms of violence (x=4.54) and eliminating harmful

practices (x=4.54) had both very high awareness results among teachers and stakeholders.

When it comes to ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere (x=4.52) provided very high awareness.

The table further proves that the goals to ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education (x=4.33), substantial increase of number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship (x=4.29), build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all (x=4.28), eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities and indigenous people and children in vulnerable situations (x=4.26) and ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women achieve literacy and numeracy (x=4.23) all had very high awareness perception of the respondents.

The findings indicated was a reflection that majority of the combined responses of the participants, the teachers of Mangaldan Integrated School SPED Center and their stakeholders had very high awareness on the various goals of UN 2030 Education Agenda.

Table 1 - Level of Awareness of the Goals of UN 2030 Education Agenda on inclusive, equitable and Gender Equality Education

	Goals of UN 2030 Education Agenda	MEAN	DE
1.	Ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes	4.58	VHA
2.	Ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.	4.33	VHA
3.	Substantial increase of number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills for employment, decent jobs and	4.29	VHA

	entrepreneurship.		
4.	Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all level of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities and indigenous people and children in vulnerable situations.	4.26	VHA
5.	Ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women achieve literacy and numeracy.	4.23	VHA
6.	Ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development.	4.64	VHA
7.	Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.	4.28	VHA
8.	End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.	4.52	VHA
9.	Eliminate all forms of violence.	4.54	VHA
10.	Eliminate all harmful practices.	4.54	VHA
Average Weighted Mean		4.42	VHA

This is attributed to the fact that the school is a recognized special education center and that inclusive education is being implemented. Concepts on inclusion, equitable education and gender equality have been well disseminated to the teachers in in-service training, school learning action cell (LAC) sessions and in the different staff conferences that they attended.

Ditto on the part of stakeholders whose awareness on disabilities and the need to fulfill the rights of special children to be educated were given through information dissemination campaigns and orientations conducted since 2011. Further, the observance of different celebrations that dwell on the abilities of children rather than their disabilities were undertaken on a school-wide setting. Gone are the days when celebrations were confined to the children with disabilities, they have become inclusive in nature so that disability awareness campaigns is continuously upheld. Teachers and parents or guardians are effective partners in the planning and execution of various activities that ensure successful staging and attainment of intended goals and objectives.

Question 2: What is the degree of effectiveness of school initiatives and activities to implement inclusive, equitable and gender equality education in the school?

The degree of effectiveness of school initiatives and activities to implement inclusive, equitable and gender equality education for children with disabilities was very much effective (VME) as revealed by the average weighted mean of 4.41. Table 2 shows the analysis of the data gathered.

It can be gleaned from the tabular presentation that the perception of respondents on the initiative to recognize milestones and innate abilities of all children with disabilities during school year-end recognition rites was very much effective ($x=4.67$). With similar descriptive equivalent of very much

effective were; accept and enroll all types of learners ($x=4.62$), School-wide observance of various celebrations on disability and various exceptionalities ($x=4.59$), tap generous stakeholders for the sustainable school feeding program for children with disabilities ($x=4.52$), Conduct assessment of all children for appropriate educational placement and development of intervention activities ($x=4.51$).

While participation of children with disabilities in regular school activities and projects for a more varied exposure and experiences for eventual mainstreaming in the society, create conditions for mainstreaming gender and development in school policies, programs and activities and develop, adopt and implement school child protection policy to eliminate discrimination and incidence of bullying have similar mean of 4.45. The initiative on implementation of technical and vocational education (TVET)-centered transition program ($x=4.43$) was very much effective. On a similar note, conduct disability awareness through advocacy and information dissemination campaigns ($x=4.41$) was very much effective.

On a different angle, the school initiative on implementing early intervention programs for children with disabilities to prepare them for full primary and secondary education mainstreaming ($x=4.13$), implement child-search-and-find activities in the community ($x=4.06$) and regular medical/ dental check up of all children in the school have descriptive equivalent of much effective.

The findings connote that teachers and stakeholders perceived that the school initiatives and activities to be implemented were very much effective. The foregoing contention was arrived at because the respondents have already been exposed to and in fact implementing such programs since the school was first recognized as a special education center. However, there is a need to intensify

implementation to fully realize the goals of this endeavor.

Table 2 - Degree of Effectiveness of School Initiatives and Activities to Implement Inclusive, Equitable and Gender Equality Education

School Initiatives/ Activities		MEAN	DE
1.	Conduct disability awareness through advocacy and information dissemination campaigns.	4.41	VME
2.	Implement child-search-and-find activities in the community.	4.06	ME
3.	Accept and enroll all types of learners.	4.62	VME
4.	Conduct assessment of all children for appropriate educational placement and development of intervention activities.	4.51	VME
5.	Implement early intervention programs for children with disabilities to prepare them for full primary and secondary education mainstreaming.	4.13	ME
6.	Implementation of technical and vocational education (TVET)-centered transition program.	4.43	VME
7.	School-wide observance of various celebrations on disability and various exceptionalities.	4.59	VME
8.	Develop, adopt and implement school child protection policy to eliminate discrimination and incidence of bullying.	4.45	VME
9.	Create conditions for mainstreaming gender and development in school policies, programs and activities.	4.45	VME
10.	Tap generous stakeholders for the sustainable school feeding program for children with disabilities.	4.52	VME
11.	Regular medical/ dental check up of all children in the school.	3.99	ME
12.	Participation of children with disabilities in regular school activities and projects for a more varied exposure and experiences for eventual mainstreaming in the society.	4.45	VME
13.	Recognize milestones and innate abilities of all children with disabilities during school year-end recognition rites.	4.67	VME
Average Weighted Mean		4.41	VME

Question 3: What is the degree of seriousness of the problems that will hinder implementation of inclusive, equitable and gender equality education?

The average weighted mean of the degree of seriousness of the problems that will hinder implementation of initiatives is moderately serious (x=2.82). Table 3 presents the data collected and details of this analysis.

The table elucidates that among the enumerated problems that may hinder implementation of the program, irregular attendance of children in school

(x=3.14) garnered the highest perception. It was followed by inadequate appropriate instructional and assistive materials and equipment in teaching children with disabilities (x=2.94), insufficient funding to finance the conduct of assessment to children with disabilities (x=2.90), sustainability in implementing programs and projects on inclusion, equitable and gender equality education (x=2.80) and lack interest and enthusiasm of parents/ guardians to send their children with disabilities to school (x=2.78).

Table 3 - Degree of Seriousness of the Problems that will Hinder Implementation of Inclusive, Equitable and Gender Equality Education

Problems to Hinder Implementation		MEAN	DE
1.	Inadequate appropriate instructional and assistive materials and equipment i		

teaching children with disabilities.	2.94	MoS
2. Irregular attendance of children in school.	3.14	MoS
3. Financial constraints in the implementation of transition program.	2.74	MoS
4. Lack of training and academic preparation of teachers in handling inclusive classes.	2.74	MoS
5. Lack interest and enthusiasm of parents/ guardians to send their children with disabilities to school.	2.78	MoS
6. Insufficient funding to finance the conduct of assessment to children with disabilities.	2.90	MoS
7. Fear of discrimination, sex and gender biases and bullying inside the school.	2.72	MoS
8. Negative attitude of teachers to cater inclusive education.	2.62	MoS
9. Lack of support from stakeholders and benefactors.	2.78	MoS
10. Sustainability in implementing programs and projects on inclusion, equitable and gender equality education.	2.80	MoS
Average Weighted Mean	2.82	MoS

Similarly is the problem on lack of support from stakeholders and benefactors ($x=2.78$). Other problems that were pronounced moderately serious were lack of training and academic preparation of teachers in handling inclusive classes and financial constraints in the implementation of transition program both have a mean of 2.74. Fear of discrimination, sex and gender biases and bullying inside the school ($x=2.72$) and negative attitude of teachers to cater inclusive education ($x=2.62$) were also labeled moderately serious. It is heartening to note that the problems were perceived moderately serious which means that there would no major threats, concerns or challenges that may hamper smooth

implementation of the school-based initiatives and activities to institute an inclusive, equitable and gender equality education at Mangaldan Integrated School SPED Center.

Question 4: What is the plan of action to implement inclusive, equitable and gender equality education for children with disabilities?

The following matrix presents the school-based plan of action envisioned as a roadmap to effectively accomplish the goals of UN 2030 Education Agenda focused on providing inclusive, equitable and gender equality education at Mangaldan Integrated School SPED Center.

Initiatives	Strategy/ Activity	Timeline	Persons Involved	Expected Outcome
Phase 1 – Pre-School Initiatives				
1. Disability Awareness Campaign	- conduct of information dissemination campaigns - hanging of posters/ tarpaulin - intensive implementation of National Early Registration - conduct of Disability Awareness Summit - conduct of Special Education Needs Children's Festival	Year-Round	Principal Head Teacher Teachers PTA Parents/ Guardians	- Awareness that children with disabilities have equal rights to education - Reduce stigmatization - Prepare children for schooling
2. Child Search & Find Activities	- conduct of SPED Caravan - community visits - home visitations - community mapping - coordination with social welfare office - establish linkages with	January- February 2 weeks before opening o classes (Oplan Balik	Principal Head Teacher Teachers PTA	- Bring all children with disabilities to school - Encourage parents to entrust their children to

	with officials, health workers - set-up assistance/ help desk for enrollment of children with disabilities	<i>Eskwela</i>		school for their education
Phase 2 – In-School Initiatives				
1. Acceptance & Enrollment of Children with Disabilities	- information dissemination on enrollment schedule and procedures - special enrollment lane for children with disabilities - issuance of school ID and disability ID from social welfare office - school/ teacher acclimatization	2 weeks before opening of classes	Principal Head Teacher Teachers PTA	- enrollment of all children with disabilities
2. Assessment & Placement of Learners	- profiling of school children - conduct of disability assessment/ diagnosis - placement of learners a. Self-contained classes b. Partial/ Full mainstreaming - enrollment in the Government's PPP Program	1 week after the opening of classes	Assessment Team Principal Head Teacher Teachers PTA	- all children with disabilities must have been assessed for proper educational placement
3. Transition Program	- Functional Academic Classes - Technical Vocational Training - Job Training	School Year Round	Principal Head Teacher Teachers PTA	- all children with disabilities age 14 and above receive training and instruction
4. Inclusive Education Programs	- School-wide observance of celebrations & special days - Child Protection Policy - GAD implementation - Guidance and counselling Services - Sustainable feeding program - Medical/ dental Check-up - Pro-Active participation of children with disabilities in curricular and co-curricular - Recognize milestones/ abilities in school year-end rites	School Year Round	Principal Head Teacher Teachers PTA Stakeholders	- holistic development of children with disabilities - no incidents of bullying, discrimination, and gender bias in the school - continuous disability awareness
Phase 3 – Exit Points				
1. Higher Academic Studies	- graduation ceremonies - issuance of credentials - administration of career assessment	End of Every School Year	Principal Head Teacher Teachers PTA	- transition from Grade 6-Grade 7, Grade 10-11 and Grade 12- to College
2. Job Placement/ Entrepreneurship	- completion/ moving-up rites - release of TVT assessment - assistance for job placement with partner industries/ work places - Financial assistance from cooperatives/ local finance/ LGU/ social welfare office	End of Every School Year	Principal Head Teacher Teachers PTA Stakeholders Partner Industries	- mainstreaming in the society - productive living of children with disabilities - well rounded personality - bully-free, gender equality - developed community - developed meaningful

Matrix - School-Based Plan of Action for the Implementation of UN 2030 Education Agenda Focused on Providing Inclusive, Equitable and Gender Equality Education

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn based on the significant findings of this research paper.

- i. The teachers and stakeholders of Mangaldan Integrated School SPED Center have very high awareness of the goals of UN 2030 Education Agenda focused on inclusive, equitable and gender equality education.
- ii. The school-based initiatives and activities to be implemented are earmarked to achieve an inclusive, equitable and gender equality education have very much effective perception among the respondents.
- iii. The problems that may hinder implementation of initiatives and activities for an inclusive, equitable and gender equality education at Mangaldan Integrated School SPED Center are moderately serious.
- iv. The plan of action is envisioned to be the roadmap for the successful implementation of school-based initiatives and activities in the attainment of an inclusive, equitable and gender equality education at Mangaldan Integrated School SPED Center.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are offered:

- i. The principal should regularly keep track of achievements and practices being implemented in the school to ensure that activities are aligned to the goals and plan of action in providing an inclusive, equitable and gender equality education to children with disabilities.
- ii. The principal together with the teachers and stakeholders must work collaboratively to intensify implementation of the school-based initiatives and activities in order to realize the goals and benefits of an inclusive, equitable and gender equality education.
- iii. The principal, in coordination with the teachers and stakeholders should use applicable, doable and effective solutions to address and minimize the problems that may hinder in the seamless implementation of initiatives and programs.
- iv. The principal in unison with the teachers and stakeholders must religiously implement the plan of action anticipating challenges and modifying strategies and activities to ascertain fulfillment of the goals set in the provision of inclusive, equitable and gender equality education to children with

disabilities at Mangaldan Integrated School SPED Center.

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