

# Told the Untold Accounts of the Senior High School Learners with Disabilities (LWDs): Bases for Equitable Pedagogical Interventions

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## Abstract

This qualitative study aimed to collect and analyze the narratives and stories of the senior high school learners with disabilities of Leonora S. Salapantan National High School. The key informants were purposively chosen and identified as learners with disabilities. Using the content analysis method, this study examined and analyzed the narratives and stories of the of the learners with disabilities in this time of pandemic. The data were collected over a certain period of time using interviews and the themes were drawn using open and selective coding. The results showed that the basic services that the learners with disabilities needed most were free transportation, home visitation from the teachers and advisers for their progression of learning and competency to read and write. The difficulties and challenges that the senior high school learners with disabilities in learning and instruction in this time of pandemic were lack of learning resources, money, and difficulty to avail quality of education without the help of the teachers who can assist them to understand the modular activities. The innovative programs of the school such as the LSSNHS Project Read Program, has to report, asses and evaluate the learners with disabilities and those learners who are struggling and those have reading difficulties progression in reading and comprehension skills development should be overseen and given importance. This program shall craft localized reading modules intended for the learners with disabilities who have reading difficulties. Moreover, the craftsmanship of the proposed “THREE Rs’ Innovation must be seriously and diligently planned, tackled and implemented. And, the plead of the learners with disabilities of free transportation in all public vehicles must be given attention and taken action wholeheartedly and collectively.

It is hoped therefore, that with a clear roadmap for the bases for equitable pedagogical interventions for the school’s academic development to be more inclusive and quality.

**Keywords:** Pedagogical Interventions, Learners with Disabilities, Senior High School Learners

## 1. Introduction

Leonora S. Salapantan National High School is the only national high of the Municipality of San Miguel, despite everything that is going in the world today, DepEd has made for us to come together and celebrate knowledge as we begin a new era in the face of education. The school is trying her best to

address the call of the persons with disability in the municipality and its neighbouring towns to avail a quality education.

The school has a total of 2,659 junior high school learners for the fiscal year 2020-21, the grade 7 has 646 (349 boys and 297 girls), the grade 8 has 646 (340 boys and 306 girls), grade 9 has 792 (413 girls and 379 boys), the grade 10 has 575 (302 girls and 273 boys), grade 11 has 483 (253 girls and 230 boys), and the grade 12 has 502 (223 boys and 279 girls).

“An inclusive classroom is designed to welcome all types of learners, lends itself to differentiated instruction, and sets the stage for student success.”

Today, our world has been stricken with a pandemic. Many lives were lost. Everything is affected but the delivery of quality education never surrenders and never stops. The Department of Education ensures to its mission that learning must continue. The Leonora S. Salapantan National High School with the strong leadership of Dr. Mary Grace L. Castillo, P-III, together with the determined and compassionate faculty and staff of this humble institution complies and enjoins all the mandates of the Department of Education to serve better and to provide the quality services to the people most especially to its learners' needs. This institution shares its knowledge and solutions to flatten the curve on how to manage the effects of the pandemic to the education landscape of the Municipality of San Miguel. Quoting the words by our Secretary Leonor Briones, during the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Ministerial Policy e-Forum held last June 18, 2020: “It has been a tough period for every school system in the world. But there is a silver lining in every dark cloud. School systems in many countries have had to adjust to blended forms of learning in response to the pandemic, using the Internet, TV, and even radio, as alternate platforms for students to gain access to education resources.”, her articulation provokes and challenges this institution to craft this research.

## 2. Methods

The following steps were utilized for the interview steps by (Creswell, 2016) in conducting interview for data collection. The key informants were purposively chosen and identified as learners with disabilities. Using the content analysis method, this study examined and analyzed the narratives and stories of the of the learners with disabilities in this time of pandemic. The data were collected over a certain period of time using interviews and the themes were drawn using open and selective coding. This research observed the ethical procedures in the conduct of the study. According to COPE, “good research should be well adjusted, well-planned, appropriately designed, and ethically approved. To conduct research to a lower standard may constitute misconduct.” According to Verdeflor (2021), “however, the researcher included an informed consent and requested the parents and the participants before they were allowed to be interviewed.”

## 3. Results and Discussions

### **The Basic Services with the Learners with Disabilities (LWDs) Need Most**

In this time of pandemic, the learners had difficulties in accessing quality of education. But the Department of Education urges that education must continue using the different learning modalities such as; modular distance learning, online distance learning, and television-/radio-based instruction. The

Department of Education continues to confront issues brought about by the corona virus diseases; the Leonora S. Salapantan National High School is gladly addressing the challenges in the basic education through its commitment Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) under DepEd order No. 012, s. 2020.

The Leonora S. Salapantan National High School Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (LSSNHS BE-LCP) is anchored and hooked with the mandate of Section 1, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution for the state to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality of education at all levels, and to take appropriate actions and steps to make education accessible to all specifically the learners of Leonora S. Salapantan National High School in all levels. Additionally, the school's (BE-LCP) is anchored with the Section 6, Chapter 1 of the Republic Act No. 9155, or the Governance of the Basic Education Act of 2001, DepEd is having the authority, accountability, and responsibility for ensuring access to, promoting in, and improving the quality of basic education. And, with the law that mandates all schools nationwide to ensure inclusive education for learners with disabilities, Republic Act (RA) 11560, inked by the President of the Republic of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte, provides that no learner shall be denied admission based on their disability.

There is no better teaching practice than experience. Sharing an experience within the context of the lecture consolidates learning, foster better understanding and impresses longer in the minds of the participants. It simply puts theories to practice first hand. Experience is the best teacher. Each of the participants had an unforgettable experience so far as a physically handicapped.

On the question asked that what are the unforgettable experiences you have experienced so far as a physically handicapped or any discrimination before pandemic? During pandemic?

One participant articulated:

“Bisitahon man kami ni Ma’am ukon Sir sa amon balay kag tudluan sang basa kag pa-intindi sang mga nasulat sa modules kay bisan gani sa eskwelahan indi ako kaintintindi kag kabalo magsabat sang mga outputs nga ara sa modules.”

(Whether Ma’am or Sir visits us in our house and teach me to read and understand what is written in the modules even at school, I do not understand and know to answer the outputs in the modules)

So, in this way home visitation is necessary to all not only to the learners with disabilities but because of the pandemic this activity was not highly encouraged but not home visitation is now encouraged by observing IATF protocols and guidelines because of the threat of the pandemic. According to Baeder (2010), teacher home visits gives families opportunity to share their culture and background with teachers. When teachers understand the culture and expertise of parents and extend the opportunities for parents to get involved, levels of parent involvement have been shown to increase.

Leonora S. Salapantan National High School has implemented its “BULIG-BASA Program”; this program has been a big help to all learners not only to the learners with disabilities to access reading

ability and comprehension ability to answer their modules. When the pandemic has been gradually mitigated this program has been implemented and deployed teachers to go barangays with identified learners with difficulties in reading and to the learners with disabilities with the support of the Local Government Unit and the barangay officials.

In truth, this is all we can do anyway. To voice whether verbally or non-verbally through sharing and telling by the power of words and actions it creates greater safety, connection and openness. On the question, what can you share and tell to the Leonora S. Salapantan National High School, if ever you will be enrolled in the school next year?

Another heart-warming narrative from the participant was:

“Gusto ko gid makatapos eskwela bisan disabled ako kag gusto ko gid kabalo magbasa.”

(I really want to finish schooling even though I am disabled and I want to be able to read.)

Learning how to read is every learner’s need. That is, 80% of the Filipino students did not reach the minimum level of proficiency in reading. Their poor scores in English, Mathematics, and Science are attributed to the students’ lack of ability in basic reading and comprehension. According to Tomas, et al. (2021), the perceived causes, origins and attendant variables of the students’ reading level were non-mastery of the elements of reading, presence of learners-at-risk, and no culture of reading. The suggested reading programs and activities may form part in the creation of contextualized reading curricula and be used as reading literacy initiatives in the schools. These initiatives are categorized as Literacy Program, Individual Reading Recovery Program and Enrichment/Enhancement Program.

The school is now having a “Project Read Program”, a special reading program created to assist struggling young learners including the learners with disabilities teach how to read and comprehend. The LSSNHS Project Read is spearheaded by Mrs. Razel Joy Cabag-Salvado, aids to learners struggling in reading and literacy and develop their reading skills and self-confidence.

### **The Difficulties and Challenges Encountered**

Everyone face difficulties and challenges in everyday life. More so, in this difficult time we have bombarded with so much of these. Our learners are vulnerable to difficulties and challenges on how to avail quality of education. Also, teachers suffer on how to deliver quality of education to their learners. Since, modular modality is now prevalent mode of modality. Our learners specially the learners with disabilities have been victims for overcoming difficulties and challenges encountered in this unprecedented time. Majority of the learners including the learners with disabilities have been tested and affected by this phenomenon their education has brought into cliff hanging. But despite the odds, the Leonora S. Salapantan National High School is in full force and committed to do its duties and responsibilities to deliver quality if education to all learners using the different modalities. The school wants to be successful, and tries its best; with the collaboration and collective efforts of the school authorities these difficulties and challenges have been given solutions.

Undeniably, our education has tremendously and adversely shaken but it never dies and never stops. The schools have done these significant activities because they value you as learners who dream big and stand tall despite adversity. In this new normal, it is highly encouraged that all must work together as one for this successful academic development of the country. As the old, African adage says, and I quote; “It takes a village to educate a child.” No one can do it alone; schools need help from everyone in order for education to succeed. In this time of pandemic, they promise to paint your dreams a new color of hard work, love and dedication.

One participant emotionally expressed his thoughts by saying:

“Kabudlay gid magtuon sa subong nga pandemya, si nanay magkadto sa barangay makuha modules ko ginalakat ya lang kay wala plete.”

(It’s hard to study during the pandemic, my mother goes to the barangay to get modules, she is just walking because there is no fare.)

Emotionally, poverty is seems to be the problem but because of the parents enthusiasm, love, care and stamina the education of his child is never compromised. This commendable act of parent has been praised and shared to the school authorities and to the local officials that they may have to craft interventions on how to help some parents who are struggling to get the modules of their children. The LGU had given free vehicles and transportation services to deliver the modules to the far flung barangays of the municipality through the coordination with the school principal to the LGU. It can be inferred that this parent is in full support of her child’s education. She gives hope and glory to her child that no matter who he is, where he is from, his dreams are valid.

### **Innovative Programs and Specific LAC Sessions to be Crafted, Created and Implemented by the Teachers of Leonora S. Salapantan National High School**

As stated in the DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016, Learning Action Cell (LAC) is a session conducted by group of teachers who engage in collaborative learning sessions to solve shared challenges encountered in school. Such challenges may include learner diversity and student inclusion, content and pedagogy, assessment and reporting, and 21st century skills and ICT integration. DepEd envisions that these LAC Sessions will serve as a school-based continuing professional development strategy for the improvement of teaching and learning. As such, this study aims to tackle, discuss and assess the possible school based shared and collaborative learning programs, innovations, and interventions to be given to the learners with disabilities of the Leonora S. Salapantan National High School. This delivery mode enables the teachers to possibly enhance their skills to uplift the learning deliveries to the learners with disabilities with sustainable quality basic services.

The Leonora S. Salapantan National High School is the only secondary school in the municipality of San Miguel which the haven of skills and knowledge of the learners. This secondary school was chosen to be part of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2023. The school has implemented “BULIG BASA PROGRAM” which was conceived, crafted and implemented way back then but now

this program has been so active in catering the reading difficulties not only with the learners with disabilities but for all. This innovative program won first place during the 2020 municipal innovation contest and was a division finalist respectively. It has been the school's pet innovation program since the start of the pandemic that exerted their efforts to extend and to go barangay to barangay to help all learners to reads including the learners with disabilities.

The school shall tap its stakeholders meeting with all the sectors of the specifically to all the transportation sectors like tricycle drivers association, jeepney drivers association and padyak drivers association to collaborate and help the learners' with disabilities with the help of the municipal officials by crafting municipal ordinance for free transportation fare to all disabled learners within the Municipality of San Miguel. This proposed local intervention that the school must spearhead and take necessary movement through a consultative meeting or conference with all the above mentioned sectors be it private or public sectors to mitigate the difficulty of the learners' with disabilities in going to school if the full blown face-to-face classes in the whole country shall be permitted implemented and allowed.

And all programs, innovations and interventions must be inclusive. Education is the pathway out of poverty and the foundation for a better future. There is no dispute to that. The government should invest more on education locally and globally in order to have an equitable and balance educational competitiveness by sponsoring local school scholarships or give to causes that build schools, supply quality localized books and learning materials and highly technologically advanced facilities and equipment and therefore, train teachers in remote areas of the Philippines. By simply helping remove some of the barriers to education, we are not just enriching the individual lives and leveling the playing field-, we are also molding and adding talented and value oriented teachers to the school system.

To further articulate and to give emphasis on the phrase "inclusivity of education" in the Philippines this is empirically relevant to be closely given a favorable attention in the country. The President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Roa Duterte has signed a law mandating all schools nationwide to ensure inclusive education for learners with disabilities. Republic Act (RA) 11560, inked by Duterte on March 11, provides that no learner shall be denied admission based on their disability. This policy instituted in all early and basic education schools, both public and private. Under this law, all learners with disabilities, whether enrolled in public or private schools, shall be accorded services and reasonable accommodation based on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and shall have the right to avail of the appropriate support and related services. It also mandates creation of an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) of learners with disabilities. The ILRC shall be a "physical or virtual center" that will serve as a one-stop shop for the delivery of free support services to learners with disabilities and the implementation of inclusive education programs. So, the collaborative efforts of the Department of Education (DepEd), and with local government units (LGUs), shall initially establish and maintain at least one ILRC in all cities and municipalities. This highly commendable act shall be a great help to tackle global challenges and issues.

Another significant educational activity and platform that the Philippine Education System shall boost and genuinely do is to invest more on research, teachers' trainings/continuing professional development,



both local and abroad, and technology development specifically in agriculture and fishery education since the Philippines is agriculturally and fishery sufficient and rich. So, if our Philippine Education System should give more importance and priority to these important things for sure our country shall be more productive and therefore food security is highly available and stable. Because if we are food sufficient, the country shall not be recorded as the most number of food insecure people in Southeast Asia, “with 59 million Filipinos suffering from moderate to severe lack of consistent access to food.” So, the commendable effort of the DepEd Regional Office VI headed by Dr. Ramir Uytico is to integrate farm school education in the region.

With the collaborative efforts of the educational learned personalities/leaders and communities are greatly encouraged and this is one of the best practices and vehicles that we, Filipinos, should master to craft our Philippine Education to be more globally competitive and advanced. We must think global and act local for the betterment of the country.

This proposed school innovation the “THREE Rs” of Relief, Recovery and Rebuilding must be taken consideration in the LAC Session of the school. Relief is to give you urgent resources so that we can provide effective remote instructions and supports at scale in this time of pandemic. Recovery is to provide extra investments to help students, teachers and community make up lost ground as we return to in-school operations. Rebuilding is to redesign the system to focus on nurturing the whole child and equal provision of opportunities.

Summarily, these are just localized innovations, interventions, best practices and actions of the Philippine Education System that gear toward a better education in the Philippines to be globally competitive and globally advance and unique in the contribution to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Relatively, in creating and achieving inclusivity of education at Leonora S. Salapantan National High School revisit and redesign their localized innovations, interventions and programs to address not only the learners with disabilities but also for all learners. And that, the school is ought to provide and deliver equal access to affordable learning atmosphere, to eliminate gender and discrimination.

Based from the preceding themes, the following conclusions were made:

1. The parents, local government unit and school authorities’ participations especially this time of pandemic in their children’s learning needs are imperative and have brought a positive impact in the teaching-learning process of their children. The concerns of the learners with disabilities must be given preferential attention and solution with the collective efforts of all the concerned entities for the school can deliver inclusive and quality education for all and to elevate literate rate in the municipality. So, the collective parental, stakeholders’ and teachers’ involvements and supports of the school as well as the Local Government Unit (LGU) to the children’s education are pinned down through this investigation. With the collaborative efforts of the educational learned personalities/leaders and communities are greatly encouraged and this is one of the best practices and

- vehicles that we, Filipinos, should master to craft our Philippine Education to be more globally competitive and advanced. We must think global and act local for the betterment of the country.
2. The assessment and results from the evaluation and progression of the learners with disabilities must be reported to all for everybody's knowledge, understanding and comprehension. Issues such as home visitations and reading difficulties of the Learners with Disabilities (LWDs) should be tackled in the school's Learning Action Cell (LAC Sessions.)
  3. The school's programs, interventions and innovations must be inclusive, quality and accessible to all learners in conformity to the Department of Education's vision, mission and core values

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