INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: CONCEIVED THROUGH THE LAWS OF THE LAND
By: Hazel C. Loreto
Teacher II

The Philippines had a share of long struggles in history to achieve its coveted sovereignty as an independent, democratic state. Wherefore, the 1987 Constitution was drafted and ratified by the majority of Filipinos as an aftermath of its own version of socio-cultural revolution and dark socio-political unrest. Through a series of revolutionary primers, historical conventions, constitutional commissions, and cracks of charter change, the country found itself with yet another preamble and a new set of 18 promising articles. Amongst these eighteen articles, that went through a process of plebiscite, Article XIV has the provisionary elements for the country’s education, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports. From then on, the first two sections of the said article would later influence the changing landscape formation of the Philippine educational system.

Utterly, there are 19 particular sections found under Article XIV. So far, the first two sections, unless otherwise amended in the constitution itself by virtue of Article XVII (Amendments or Revisions), have the most potent provisions to implement laws and policies affecting educational system and institutions. Primarily important is Section 1. This section in particular declares the commitment of the state in promoting and keeping education as one of the Filipino citizens’ basic rights. The section also echoes UNESCO’s proclamation of EFA, thereby giving domestic legal bases to those national policies of the country that support UNESCO’s inclusive education principles. Then, the second section which enumerates the declared establishments and maintenance of quality education that is “relevant to the needs of the people and society,” affordable, and equipped
with financial assistance programs; and an education that is basically for everyone – be it formal, informal, or any learning systems and training programs that are responsive to the needs of the community. Practically, the first and second sections of Article XIV, laid the basic foundation for the development of special and inclusive education in the Philippines. These legal bases mentioned have been empowering the Philippine government and the Filipino citizens to implement both national and local education policies. And, not only that, the legal bases made the Philippine educational system adaptable to the educational principles of the international institutions such as the UN and other regional unions of the world.

Considerably, the constitution of a country is highly respected as the mother of all laws of the land. It was promulgated as a set of binding principles on how a country leads, legislates, and litigates. When provisions of basic rights, delivery of justice, and executions of legalities are called upon by a country, it is the ratified constitution which will determine the legitimacy of such acts. Thus, the reformations and creations of policies affecting the education department, which is part of the government’s executive body, were duly enshrined by the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

References:
Inclusion in Education. Retrieved from https://en.unesco.org