PHILIPPINE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A METHODICAL IMPLEMENTATION

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In 1987, the current Philippine Constitution was established – along with it is the country’s education for all (EFA) basic elements were institutionalized. Before and after the Philippine 1987 Constitution was ratified, particular international unions, like the United Nations, and several states were already gearing up, if not working on improvements already, for education as one of the basic rights of every citizen of the contemporary world. Now, the Philippines have been gradually working on its own brand of inclusive education. The process may have been quiet and slow, but the country has been on it for a number of scores and years already.

As far as operational definitions are concerned, there is an obvious difference between special education and inclusive education. Philippines did not have an inclusive education system to start with, yet it seems that the country has already had a long history of special education. Across the country, there were already established schools for the blind, the deaf, the mute, the mentally retarded, the handicapped, the emotionally and behaviorally unstable, and the gifted. Eventually, these manifestations of early interventions in the special education program may have been the spark plug of the country’s inclusive education program.

Although special and inclusive education are different, they are actually two of a kind. What happened in the Philippines was that the special education was retained; and was transitioned to an inclusive education system later on. The ground works of the transitioning phase was evident in the Philippine model of inclusive education. The
process of inclusion has been in place through a series of transitioning programs and national policy frameworks. Some of the examples of these were projects like the “Transition Program for Children with Mental Retardation in the Philippines” and policies like the “National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy”. All in all, these transitioning models and programs are basically defined under the two approaches: (1) partial mainstreaming towards inclusion; and (2) full mainstreaming or inclusion. Moreover, sustaining programs were strategically added to reinforce the sustainable development of the Philippine inclusive education.

Looking back at the history of Philippine education, learning readiness have always been founded at home with parents and experiences as mere teachers and facilitators. As society started to grow, complexities in learning styles and institutions also grew. At first, segregation style was predominant – the “who” the learner should be and the “what” learning should be taught made education limited exclusive only to particular members of the society. Then, the world declared that education should be for all. And like concentric ripples or falling dominoes, various learning institutions followed suit. Policies, programs, and models to follow were also established. Of course, the Philippines, like the other countries, has to go through the transitioning process as well.

References:

Transition Education Program. Retrieved from https://www.illcphilippines.com