

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION CENTERS IN REGION I, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, PHILIPPINES

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Abstract— Stakeholder engagement in order to raise funds to effectively implement special education projects is one very important undertaking of a school head. It necessitates establishment of linkages to properly communicate the needs of the school to government as well as non-government agencies who have the heart for learners with special education needs. The objectives of this paper stressed on the level of implementation of the special education projects, degree of seriousness of the financial constraints in the implementation of the projects, extent of effects of the financial constraints on the successful implementation of the projects and the measures developed and implemented to augment funds that would ensure successful implementation of the projects of the recognized Special Education Centers in Region I. The descriptive-analytical method of research was employed with survey-questionnaire as its data-gathering instrument. Respondents were randomly selected from among the teachers and stakeholders of the 16 special education centers in Region I. Based from the data gathered, it was concluded that special education projects were highly implemented; financial constraints that are incurred in the implementation of the projects were very highly serious and the financial constraints had very high effects on the implementation of the projects of special education centers. The findings indicated that the school heads with the technical assistance of supervisors must regularly coordinate with and inform the SPED teachers, the parents, the local government unit officials and other stakeholders of the future and on-going projects to be able to fully and successfully implement all projects; the school head, the SPED teachers, the parents, the local government unit officials and other stakeholders should work in concerted efforts to address and minimize financial constraints that hinder implementation of special education projects; the school head, in coordination with the SPED teachers and the local government unit officials should use applicable and effective solutions to address and minimize the effects of financial constraints in the implementation of the projects and the school head; a memorandum of agreement (MOA) should be executed with the stakeholders as assurance that programs/ projects will push through and will be realized successfully and with the assistance of SPED teachers and local government officials should adopt and implement the developed measures effectively and systematically to augment the funds to ensure successful implementation of the projects of special education centers in Region I, Department of Education, Philippines.

Keywords— Stakeholders, Special Education Center Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs) (key words)

1. Introduction

The funds for special education projects are critical to successfully meet the goals for teacher and pupil improvement. It is possible and acceptable that a school or district can obtain funds from other sources to completely implement and sustain all projects, at all times (Quinones, 2012).

Most local governments also provide educational funding that is unique in its form and disbursement procedures. Some of these sources may use funding that is flowing through that province/ municipality. Government funds can be allocated based on a funding formula or it can be competitive. It is a good idea to check with the provincial/ municipal office to learn more about these opportunities. With some research, it is surprising how many private and organization-related funding sources there are for educators and schools (Cardona, 2012).

It is important to identify possible funding source and carefully read through the application guidelines. It is equally the “idea” that a school meets the specifications outlined in the grant. There is a need to develop a checklist of all of the mandatory requirements of the grant. Clearly, the answer to constraints about insufficient funds is sourcing of funds (Danielson, 2013). Meaningful engagement of

stakeholders especially to those who have the heart for special education must be undertaken. This is because the education of learners with special education needs (LSENs) – both the gifted/talented and those with disabilities cannot be left to chances (Rossmiller, 2009). The school head needs to have the audacity to look for other sources of funds, from willing and magnanimous donors, such as the local government unit officials, private corporations/business establishments, non-government organizations (NGO) and private individuals who have the heart and concern for children with special needs (CSN), (Moore, 2008). The school head needs to consider this guideline in order to make a SMART goal in seeking for additional funds. This is a goal that is: S = Specific with what, why and how, M = Measurable with tangible evidence, A = Achievable — challenging but not biting off too much, R = Results-focused, and T = Time-bound.

Before presenting the numbers, it is important to distinguish between total special education spending and total spending to educate a student with a disability. Total special education spending includes amounts used to employ special education teachers, related service providers, and special education administrators, as well as spending on special transportation services and non-personnel items (e.g., materials,

supplies, technological supports) purchased under the auspices of the special education program (Thomas, 2010). Some portion of special education spending is used for instructional services that normally would be provided as part of the regular education curriculum offered to regular education pupils. In contrast to total special education spending, total spending to educate a student with a disability encompasses all school resources, including both special and regular education and other special needs programs, used to provide a comprehensive educational program to meet student needs.

Most learners with disabilities spend substantial amounts of time in the regular education program and benefit from the same administrative and support services as all other pupils. With this distinction in mind, the additional expenditure attributable to special education is measured by the difference between the total spending to educate a learner with a disability and the total spending to educate a regular education learner (i.e., a pupil with no disabilities or other special needs). This concept of additional expenditure emphasizes that what is being measured is a reflection of actual spending patterns on special and regular education pupils and not a reflection of some ideal concept of what it should cost to educate either pupil. The numbers and data are presented in this report represent “what is” rather than necessarily “what ought to be” (Cramer, 2010).

The concept of additional expenditure includes a learner who is served entirely within a special class designed for pupils with disabilities. This kind of placement is typically provided only to those with severe disabilities and the most significant special needs. In such cases, virtually all of the instructional and related service personnel would be included under special education spending. However, some of the services these learners receive in a special class replace instruction that is provided to other pupils in a regular education classroom (Anden, 2008). Thus, the only way to measure the additional expenditures used for such severely disabled learners is to compare the total spending used to educate these pupils to the total spending used to educate their regular education counterparts.

Another important conceptual issue that needs to be addressed before presenting the results of fund analysis arises from the use of the term expenditure. The previous studies of special education have used the term cost rather than expenditure. The word cost, in contrast to expenditure, implies that one knows something about results. To say it cost twice as much to educate a special versus a regular education pupil implies that one is holding constant what is meant by the term “educate.”

At the end of the day, the most important aspect would be the capability of the school head with the technical assistance provided by the supervisors in order to effectively seek donations by following strictly the criteria and requirements set forth by the donors.

The projects of the Special Education Centers are enormous and varied. However, the funds allocated for these projects are not sufficient enough to ensure the smooth and continuous implementation of all said projects. In the process, some of the projects are set aside in favor of the most pressing and immediately-needed ones.

Most of the projects that are set aside each school year are those that pertain to facilities and equipment that are quite expensive and those that are earmarked for the professional growth and development of the SPED teachers. Unfortunately, these aspects are vital and always important, because teachers need to be abreast with the latest trends in special education instruction of both the gifted and talented, as well as those with disabilities, making use of the latest technology in facilities and equipment.

The researchers believe that with the approval and support of the District Supervisor/ Education Program Supervisors, and the cooperation of teachers, specific procedures can be put in place to systematically seek the assistance of non-government organizations (NGO), private business establishments and civic-oriented individuals who have the heart and concern for children with special needs (CSN).

Donations from all possible benefactors can be in cash and in kind. And with proper representations, fund sourcing can extend to donors from other countries. This thrust and reality can help sustain the operations and the implementation of the varied projects of the special education centers in Region I, Philippines. This can also ensure that the education and development of both the gifted and talented, as well as the children with disabilities would be continuous and evolving for the future generations to benefit and enjoy.

These are the very reasons why this Action Research came into being. Apart from its being very timely and relevant, this Action Research is expected to generate the heightened consciousness of the local government unit officials, the SPED teachers, the parents and the community residents, on the need and importance to augment the present funds for the effective and systematic implementation of the varied projects of the Special Education Center of Mangaldan Integrated School.

2. Problem

This Action Research determined how to augment the funds for the effective and systematic implementation of the projects of special education centers in Region I.

Specifically, it dealt on the following;

- What is the level of implementation of the projects at the special education centers of Region I?
- What is the degree of seriousness of the financial constraints in the implementation of the projects of the special education centers?
- What is the extent of effects of the financial constraints on the successful implementation of the projects of the special education center?
- What measures must be developed and implemented to augment the funds that would ensure the successful implementation of the projects of the special education centers in Region I?

3. Generation of Alternative Solutions

The researchers believe that to implement special education projects of the recognized SPED centers, the following actions should be actualized and implemented:

- Make a thorough assessment of the implementation of projects to determine which of these are set aside because of lack/inadequate funds, and how these affect the operation of the Special Education Center.
- Planning to source and outsource funds for the Special Education Center projects.
- Search for viable and willing donors of funds to successfully and systematically implement the projects that were set aside because of inadequate/lack of funds.
- Enumerate the solutions to the problems that commonly happen during the implementation of the projects.

4. Plan Of Action

This part of the Action Research discusses the following:

- A) objectives; B) time frame; C) target participants/respondents; D) activities to be undertaken; and, E) research design.

A. Objectives

The main objective of this Action Research is to determine how the funds for the projects of the special education centers can be augmented and sustained.

Specific Objectives

- To determine the level of implementation of the projects at the special education centers.
- To determine the degree of seriousness of the financial constraints in the implementation of the projects of the special education centers.
- To determine the extent of effects of the financial constraints on the implementation of the projects of the special education centers.
- To develop measures to augment the funds that will ensure the successful implementation of the projects of the special education centers in Region I.

B. Time Frame

This Action Research was conducted from September to January 2019.

C. Target Participants

The participants of this Action Research were randomly selected from the recognized special education centers of the sixteen (16) Schools Division Offices (SDO) in Region q totaling 100 respondents.

D. Activities to be Undertaken

The following Gantt chart presents the series of activities that were actualized to complete this Action Research.

Activity	September	October	November	December	January
1. Identification of projects at Special Education Center					
2. Unstructured one-on-one interview SPED teachers					
3. Validation of the questionnaire					
4. Administration/floating of questionnaire to the SPED teachers					
Activity	September	October	November	December	January
5. Analysis and interpretation of processed data from responses of SPED teachers to the questionnaire					
6. Development of measures to augment funds for SPED projects					
7. Implementation of measures to augment funds for SPED projects					
8. Drafting of the conclusions and recommendations of this Action Research					
9. Preparation of Terminal Report of this Action Research					
10. Submission of the Terminal Report of this Action Research					

E. Research Design

This Action Research was descriptive-analytical in design. It determined extensively the implementation of the projects of the special education centers the availability of funds, the financial constraints and the measures needed to augment the funds.

The following relative values were used to determine the level of implementation of the projects at the special education centers:

Statistical Limit	Relative Values	Descriptive Equivalent	Symbol
4.21 – 5.00	5	Very Highly Implemented	VHI
3.41 – 4.20	4	Highly Implemented	HI
2.61 – 3.40	3	Moderately Implemented	MI
1.81 – 2.60	2	Slightly Implemented	SI
1.00 – 1.80	1	Not Implemented	NI

The following relative values were used to determine the degree of seriousness of the financial constraints in the implementation of the projects of the special education centers:

Statistical Limit	Relative Values	Descriptive Equivalent	Symbol
4.21 – 5.00	5	Very Highly Serious	VHS
3.41 – 4.20	4	Highly Serious	HS
2.61 – 3.40	3	Moderately Serious	MS
1.81 – 2.60	2	Slightly Serious	SS
1.00 – 1.80	1	Not Serious	NS

The following relative values were used to determine the extent of effect of the financial constraints on the implementation of the projects of the special education centers:

Statistical Limit	Relative Values	Descriptive Equivalent	Symbol
4.21 – 5.00	5	Very High Effect	VHE
3.41 – 4.20	4	High Effects	HE
2.61 – 3.40	3	Moderate Effect	ME
1.81 – 2.60	2	Slight Effect	SE
1.00 – 1.80	1	No Effect	NE

5. Findings

The following were the salient findings of this study:

Question 1: *What is the level of implementation of the projects at the special education centers in Region 1?*

The projects at the special education centers were highly implemented, as indicated by the average weighted mean of 3.58. Table 1 presents the facts and details relative to this analysis.

Specifically, the provisions for classroom beautification ($x = 4.36$) were very highly implemented, while the provisions for parents' assembly for data and information dissemination ($x = 4.08$), the safe and clear play area ($x = 4.14$) were highly implemented. Similarly, there are television sets and other gadgets in some classrooms to promote reading and reading development ($x = 4.00$) among the pupils, that was a highly implemented project at the Special Education Center.

In addition, the special education centers can conduct power point presentations to promote and teach lessons in social studies or Araling Panlipunan ($x = 3.39$), while projects that pertain to arts education and development ($x = 3.26$) are sufficient and sustained.

The findings indicated that majority of the projects of the Special Education are moderately implemented, and that at the time this research was conducted, there are still projects that are wanting and must be sustained. It is equally worth-noting that the researcher and the

Table 1: Level of Implementation of the Projects at the Special Education Center in Mangaldan Integrated School

SPED Projects	Mean	De
1. Models of concept, perhaps insects, and label each part for science instruction	3.05	MI
2. Television and other gadgets to promote reading and reading development	4.00	HI
3. Powerpoint presentations to promote and teach lessons in social studies/Araling Panlipunan	3.39	MI
4. Arts materials and tools for arts education and development	3.26	MI
5. Toys for physical and mental play	3.16	MI
6. Safe and clean play area	4.19	HI
7. Training activities for SPED teachers	3.26	MI
8. Special gadgets for each pupil with special needs	3.09	MI

9. Provisions for parents' assembly for data and information dissemination	4.08	MI
10. Provisions for classroom beautification	4.36	MI
Average Wighted Mean	3.58	HI

Legend:

Statistical Limit	Relative Values	Descriptive Equivalent	Symbol
4.21 – 5.00	5	Very Highly Implemented	VHI
3.41 – 4.20	4	Highly Implemented	HI
2.61 – 3.40	3	Moderately Implemented	MI
1.81 – 2.60	2	Slightly Implemented	SI
1.00 – 1.80	1	Not Implemented	NI

Special Education teachers are exerting efforts to ensure that all projects are implemented and sustained so that all the children with special needs are attended to effectively and satisfactorily.

They are educated and their growth and development are ensured so they can easily integrate themselves with others in the community, and be part of the community workforce.

In the quest to fully implement all the projects at the Special Education Center, the school head collaborates consistently with local government unit officials, non-government organizations and potential donors, to inform them about the aid or help they can provide to promote, augment or sustain the project/s.

Question 2: *What is the degree of seriousness of the financial constraints in the implementation of the projects of the special education centers?*

The financial constraints that are encountered in the implementation of the projects at the special education centers were very highly serious, as indicated by the average weighted mean of 4.27. Table 2 presents the details of this analysis.

Table 2: Degree of Seriousness of Financial Constraints in the Implementation of Special Education Projects

Constraints	Mean	De
1. Projects based assessment is not appropriate and regular	4.00	HS
2. Funds do not come/arrive on time	4.11	HS
3. Projects are difficult to implement because of:	4.17	HS
a) inadequate funds	4.56	VHS
b) delayed released of funds		
4. Fluctuation pf prices of materials/gadgets/tools	4.28	VHS
Approval of project implementation is hindered by bureaucracy	4.39	VHS

6.	There are many unsolicited advice on how projects must be implemented	4.50	VHS
7.	Some previously planned procedures are changed	4.17	HS
8.	Little or no alternative options in the purchase of materials/gadgets	4.28	VHS
Average Wighted Mean		4.27	VHS

Legend:

Statistical Limit	Relative Values	Descriptive Equivalent	Symbol
4.21 – 5.00	5	Very Highly Serious	VHS
3.41 – 4.20	4	Highly Serious	HS
2.61 – 3.40	3	Moderately Serious	MS
1.81 – 2.60	2	Slightly Serious	SS
1.00 – 1.80	1	Not Serious	NS

The delayed release of funds ($x = 4.56$), the fluctuation of prices of materials, gadgets or tools ($x = 4.26$) were very highly serious financial constraints that hinder the implementation of the projects at the special education centers. Bureaucracy that delay the implementation of approved projects ($x = 4.39$), the unsolicited advices on how the project/s should be implemented ($x = 4.50$) and the little or no alternative options in the purchase of materials or gadgets ($x = 4.28$) were also very highly serious constraints that pertain to the finances and logistics in the implementation of the projects in the Special Education Center.

The findings indicated that the enumerated constraints are known to the school head and the SPED teachers, and these can hinder the successful implementation of the said projects. However, these constraints are expected considering that apart from the limited budget for special education, there is no explicit process on the sourcing of funds. This reality sometimes leaves the school head alone in the task of soliciting funds to actualize the implementation of some projects until full completion.

However, it is worth-noting that there are local government officials and some concerned citizens who have the heart for children with special needs, who willingly assist in cash or in kind. It is through effective information campaign that others are informed about these projects. Thus, they are also encouraged to help towards successful completion of projects in the special education centers in Region I.

Question 3: *What is the extent of effect of the financial constraints on the successful implementation of the projects of the special education centers?*

Financial constraints had very high effects on the implementation of the projects of the Special Education Center as indicated by the average weighted mean of 4.31, as shown in Table 3.

Because of financial constraints, some projects are started but were never finished or completed ($x = 4.56$), while the learning and growth of the gifted and talented pupils are stalled

and slowed down ($x = 4.39$). Moreover, the teaching-learning is diminished and not

Table 3: Extent of Effect of Financial Constraints on the Implementation of Special Education Projects

	Effects of Constraints	Mean	De
1.	Teaching-learning is diminished and not sustained	4.39	VHE
2.	Teachers use teaching techniques and strategies not clearly understood by pupils, particularly those with disabilities	4.33	VHE
3.	Learning and growth of the gifted and talented pupils are stalled/slowed down	4.39	VHE
4.	Interest and enthusiasm of pupils are diminished	4.06	HE
5.	Projects and activities are delayed	4.17	HE
6.	Some projects started are not finished	4.56	VHE
Average Wighted Mean		4.31	VHE

Legend:

Statistical Limit	Relative Values	Descriptive Equivalent	Symbol
4.21 – 5.00	5	Very High Effect	VHE
3.41 – 4.20	4	High Effects	HE
2.61 – 3.40	3	Moderate Effect	ME
1.81 – 2.60	2	Slight Effect	SE
1.00 – 1.80	1	No Effect	NE

sustained ($x = 4.39$) because some teachers use teaching techniques and strategies that are not clearly understood by the pupils, particularly those with disabilities ($x = 4.33$).

The findings indicated that financial constraints deeply affect, not only the implementation, but also the completion of the projects at the special education centers. There are varied reasons why some projects are left unfinished halfway and these affect the teaching-learning process, diminish the interest and motivation of the pupils and some lessons are no longer taught or discussed because of the absence of the appropriate equipment, gadget or tools.

The mentioned realities led to the resolve of the researcher to conduct this study so that the problems in the implementation of the projects at the special education center can be immediately addressed, minimized if not completely eradicated.

Question 4: *What measures must be developed and implemented to augment the funds that would ensure the successful implementation of the projects of special education centers in Region I?*

The following matrix presents the series of measures that are envisioned to effectively augment the funds that can ensure the successful implementation and completion of projects at the special education centers in Region I.

Measures to Augment Funds for the Projects at the Special Education Centers in Region I

Objective	Strategy/Activity	Person/s Involved	Time Frame	Expected Result/s
1. To launch massive information dissemination on the pupils of Special Education Center of Mangaldan Integrated School	1a. Hanging of banners and tarpaulin on information about the Special Education Center in plaza, market, church yards and other places 1b. Distribution of leaflets that contain the following information: a) needs of the SPED Center b) projects to be implemented c) funds needed d) who may donate	1. School head, SPED teachers, parents, local government unit officials	1. Whole month of April every year	1. Community residents and political donors will be informed about the SPED Center and its needs
2. To officially inform all possible stakeholders and donors of the projects and the funds needed for SPED projects	2. Meeting of all potential/possible donors and stakeholder for SPED projects	2. School head, SPED teachers, parents, local government unit officials and community residents	2. First Saturday of May every year	2. All participants in the meeting will clearly understand the projects and the needed funds to implement such projects
3. To officially solicit the assistant/help of potential/possible donors	3. Sending letter to the potential/possible donors that details the projects and cost and how to donate cash or in kind	3. School head with the assistance of SPED teachers	3. Whole month of May every year	3. Potential donors will be officially requested to help/assist in the implementation of SPED projects
4. To officially accept, process and document every donation/assistance	4. Donation in whatever form are accepted, processed and documented	4. School head, SPED teachers, parents, local government unit officials	4. May towards the end of the year	4. Donations are properly accepted, processed and documented
5. To implement, monitor and evaluate each funded project	5. Supervision of implementation of each project	5. School head and engineer/technician/assigned	5. As soon as funds for a project is sufficient	5. Project implementation, monitoring and evaluate are appropriately implemented
6. To prepare auditing report of a project	6. Presentation of auditing report to donors and stakeholder in a meeting	6. School head with the assistance of SPED teachers	6. Immediately after completion of every project	6. Donors and stakeholder are properly informed on the status of projects and disbursement of funds for the project

- The financial constraints encountered in the implementation of the projects of special education centers were highly serious.
- The financial constraints had very high effects on the implementation of the projects of special education centers.
- The measures that were developed are envisioned to augment the funds needed for the successful implementation of the projects of special education centers in Region I.

7. Recommendations

- The school head must regularly coordinate and inform the SPED teachers, the parents, the local government unit officials and other stakeholders of the future and on-going projects to be able to fully and successfully implement all the projects of the special education centers in Region I.
- The school head, the SPED teachers, the parents, the local government unit officials and other stakeholders should work in concerted efforts to address and minimize the financial constraints that hinder the implementation of some projects of the special education centers.
- The school head, in coordination with the SPED teachers and the local government unit officials should use applicable and effective solutions to address and minimize the effects of financial constraints on the implementation of the projects of special education centers.
- The school head, with the assistance of the SPED teachers and local government officials should implement the developed measures effectively and systematically to augment the funds that would ensure the successful implementation of the projects at the special education centers.

8. Reflections

This Action Research was able to prove that firm resolve is necessary to successfully and completely implement all the projects at the special education centers in Region I.

However, to be able to attain this objective, the assistance and coordination of the SPED teachers, the parents, the local government unit officials are always vital and important. Their efforts are expected to heighten the interest of the community residents to support the very thrust and essence of special education for children with special needs now and in the future.

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6. Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn based on the major findings of this Action Research.

- Some of the projects of the special education centers in Region I were highly implemented.

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