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## LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN REMOTE BARANGAYS OF CALANASAN, APAYAO

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined the lived experiences of elementary teachers in delivering quality education in the remote barangays of Calanasan, Apayao during the school year 2024–2025. Specifically, it explored the challenges they face in areas such as accessibility, resource availability, learner attendance, and institutional support, identify adaptive strategies employed, and assess their perceptions of support from the Department of Education and the local community to propose a strategic intervention plan responsive to the unique demands of rural education settings. Employing a qualitative design with a phenomenological approach, the study gathered data through in-depth interviews with nine teachers from three geographically isolated schools. The narratives were transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically to extract subordinate and subordinate themes that captured the essence of their lived experiences. Findings revealed that teachers faced exhausting travel conditions, weather-related hazards, severe shortages in instructional and digital resources, and high learner absenteeism driven by poverty and domestic obligations. Classroom infrastructure was often dilapidated, and parental engagement remained minimal. Despite these, teachers demonstrated remarkable resilience, improvisation, and peer collaboration. They received sporadic symbolic support from institutions but expressed a strong need for consistent, context-based assistance. Rural education is sustained largely by teacher commitment rather than institutional design.*

**KEY WORDS:** adaptive strategies, Calanasan Apayao, institutional support, lived experiences, rural education, teaching challenges

### INTRODUCTION

Education is universally recognized as a fundamental right and a crucial driver of social and economic development. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2022) underscored that ensuring equitable access to quality education promoted sustainable development, reduced

poverty, and fostered social mobility. However, achieving this goal remained a challenge in remote and geographically isolated areas, where infrastructure limitations, lack of resources, and difficult living conditions impeded the effective delivery of education.

A study by Mulkeen and Higgins (2019) on teacher challenges in rural sub-Saharan Africa revealed that teachers working in isolated

areas faced transportation difficulties, resource shortages, and professional isolation, leading to low motivation and high attrition rates. Similarly, research by Lock, Budgen, and Lamm (2020) in Australia indicated that teachers in rural schools often experienced professional development gaps, limited access to learning materials, and difficulties in retaining students due to economic hardships. In Latin America, a study by Vaillant and Rossel (2018) found that rural educators in Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia encountered significant challenges in classroom management due to multi-grade teaching and insufficient instructional support. These studies highlighted the universal struggle of teachers in remote areas, emphasizing the urgent need for targeted policies and support mechanisms.

The right to education was protected under various international and national legal frameworks. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) stated that education must be accessible to all, regardless of geographical barriers. Similarly, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda aimed to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all," particularly in marginalized and remote areas (UN, 2015).

In the Philippine context, the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, Article XIV, Section 1, mandated the state to "protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels." Additionally, the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (Republic Act No. 4670) ensured the welfare of teachers, particularly those assigned to far-flung areas. Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 21, s. 2019, known as the Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program, emphasized the provision of support for teachers working in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs) to enhance learning outcomes. These legal foundations reinforced the government's commitment to addressing educational disparities in remote communities.

The reality of delivering education in remote barangays remained challenging despite the existence of policies designed to support teachers. Teachers assigned to far-flung areas such as Calanasan, Apayao, often endured harsh working conditions, including inadequate transportation, a lack of teaching materials, and difficulty in engaging learners. These factors not only affected the quality of education but also contributed to teacher burnout and turnover rates. Given the persistent challenges faced by educators in remote settings, an in-depth exploration of their experiences was necessary to provide data-driven recommendations for policy improvements and interventions.

Several studies in the Philippines documented the struggles of teachers working in geographically isolated schools. A study by Bautista (2019) examined the lived experiences of teachers in remote areas of Mindanao and found that poor infrastructure, extreme weather conditions, and safety concerns were among the biggest barriers to education delivery. Research by Ganal, Alinsunod, and Guiab (2021) revealed that teachers in upland schools in Northern Luzon encountered issues with learner absenteeism, lack of electricity, and inadequate instructional materials, which hindered effective teaching. Meanwhile, Manalo and Bartolata (2020) studied the challenges of teachers in indigenous communities and noted that cultural differences and limited access to professional development programs negatively impacted their teaching effectiveness. These studies provided strong evidence that teachers in remote areas continued to struggle despite existing educational reforms.

Calanasan, Apayao, was one of the many remote barangays in the Philippines where teachers faced numerous difficulties in fulfilling their duties. The area was characterized by rough terrains, making daily travel to schools physically demanding. Reports from local educators indicated that transportation remained a significant issue, as teachers had to navigate long distances on foot or through limited means of transport. The availability of teaching resources was also a concern, with some schools experiencing shortages of textbooks, modules, and technological tools. Additionally, learner attendance fluctuated due to economic difficulties, requiring teachers to exert extra effort in sustaining student engagement. These local challenges mirrored national and international findings, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions.

The struggles faced by teachers in remote barangays had persisted for decades, yet policies addressing these issues often failed to fully capture the depth of their experiences. Observations from teachers in Calanasan, Apayao, indicated that their needs and concerns remained largely unaddressed. Conducting this study provided an opportunity to document their challenges, highlight effective coping strategies, and propose recommendations that could inform policy improvements.

This study aimed to examine the challenges faced by teachers in delivering quality education in the remote barangay of Calanasan, Apayao, during the school year 2024–2025. Findings from this study would contribute to a deeper understanding of the realities of teaching in remote areas and provide insights for strengthening educational support systems.

### Statement of the Problem

This study examined the challenges faced by elementary teachers in delivering quality education in Calanasan, Apayao, during the school year 2024–2025.

1. What challenges do teachers encounter in delivering education in a remote barangay in terms of:
  - a. Accessibility and Transportation
  - b. Availability of Teaching Resources
  - c. Learner Attendance and Engagement
  - d. Funding for School Operations and Resources
2. What strategies do teachers employ to cope up with each of the challenges?
3. How do the teachers perceive support provided by the Department of Education and local community?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative method utilizing a phenomenological approach to examine the challenges faced by elementary teachers in delivering quality education in the remote barangays of Calanasan, Apayao, during the school year 2024–2025. A phenomenological approach is a qualitative research method that seeks to understand and describe individuals' lived experiences of a phenomenon, focusing on how they perceive and make meaning of their experiences. According to Creswell (2013), it involves "a study of individuals' lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon." The phenomenological approach was appropriate for this study as it sought to understand and describe the lived experiences of teachers working in geographically isolated areas. This approach allowed for a deeper exploration of the meanings they ascribed to their personal and professional challenges, adaptive strategies, and perceptions of institutional and community support.

### Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in the municipality of Calanasan, Apayao in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Philippines. Calanasan, formerly known as Bayag, was noted for its vast land area, covering approximately 1,256.15 square kilometers, making it the largest municipality in the province. It was also the least populated, with a total of 12,550 residents as recorded in the 2020 Census. While the municipality itself was not officially classified as a Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Area (GIDA), several of its remote barangays, such as Langnao, Don Roque, and Eleazar, faced conditions that mirrored those of GIDA areas including limited access to essential services and education.

The municipality comprised 18 regular barangays and 2 administrative barangays and was inhabited primarily by the Isnags, Ilocanos, and Kalingas. Due to its scattered settlements and mountainous landscape, teachers assigned to remote areas of Calanasan frequently encountered challenges such as difficult road access, lack of transportation, and limited teaching and learning materials. Some learners also lived far from school, contributing to inconsistent attendance.

The selection as the locale of this study was anchored in the unique realities faced by elementary teachers working in its remote barangays. Their experiences provided rich, firsthand insights into the challenges of delivering education in geographically remote areas within a non-GIDA municipality. This study sought to capture these lived experiences and contribute to the broader understanding of educational service delivery in mountainous and sparsely populated regions. The findings served as input for developing localized policies and strategies to improve teaching conditions and student learning outcomes in similar contexts.

### Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The participants of this study were the teachers assigned to Langnao Elementary School, Ferdinand Elementary School, and Don Roque Elementary School in Calanasan, Apayao. These schools were located in remote areas and faced various challenges related to accessibility, resource availability, and learner engagement. A total enumeration sampling method was employed, considering the relatively small number of teachers in these schools. A total of nine (9) teachers participated in the study.

### Data Gathering Instruments

This study made use of a researcher-constructed interview protocol as the primary data-gathering instrument. The tool was designed to elicit rich, in-depth narratives from teachers concerning the lived experiences of working in remote barangays. The interview guide was structured according to the key components of the research problem and aligned with the phenomenological approach.

The guide included open-ended questions covering four main areas. The first area focused on challenges encountered in delivering education, exploring experiences related to accessibility and transportation, availability of teaching resources, and learner attendance and engagement. The second area examined strategies used to overcome challenges, focusing on the methods, techniques, and resourcefulness of teachers in addressing day-to-day difficulties. The third area covered perception of support from the Department of Education and the local community, exploring their reflections and evaluation of institutional and community-based assistance. The fourth area centered on recommendations for improving working conditions, allowing teachers to share their insights and suggest meaningful interventions based on their lived realities.

The interview protocol ensured that data collection was flexible,

participant-centered, and reflective, encouraging participants to speak freely and elaborate on their personal and professional journeys. The researcher acted as a facilitator, guiding the conversation while allowing participants to shape the narrative.

### Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering process was conducted in accordance with ethical and procedural standards appropriate for qualitative research. Prior to the conduct of the study, formal permission was sought from the Division Office of Apayao through official channels. A request letter was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent of Apayao, detailing the objectives of the study, the scope of data collection, and the significance of the research in addressing the challenges faced by teachers in geographically isolated areas. Upon approval, an endorsement was secured for distribution to the respective District Supervisor and the School Heads of Langnao Elementary School, Ferdinand Elementary School, and Don Roque Elementary School.

Once clearance was obtained, the researcher conducted a courtesy visit to each of the participating schools. The interviews were conducted in person, using the prepared interview guide. Each session was held at a time and place convenient for the respondent, ensuring privacy and minimal distraction. The interviews were audio-recorded (with consent) and supplemented with field notes to capture key observations and non-verbal expressions.

Participants were encouraged to speak freely, and probing questions were used when necessary to deepen responses or clarify statements. The interviews were conducted in a conversational manner to make participants comfortable and to elicit authentic and reflective narratives.

### Data Analysis

The responses collected from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method well-suited for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning across qualitative data. In line with the phenomenological design, the analysis focused on capturing the essence of teachers' lived experiences in the context of teaching in remote barangays.

Thematic analysis followed these steps: Data familiarization was the first step, wherein the researcher transcribed and reviewed all interview recordings and field notes to immerse in the data and gain a preliminary understanding of the content. This was followed by initial coding, during which significant statements and excerpts were coded manually by identifying recurring concepts, phrases, or expressions that related to the core research questions. The next step was theme development, where codes were clustered into broader categories or themes that represented shared experiences among participants, such as "Navigating Difficult Terrains," "Coping Without Materials," "Community Gaps and Gains," or "Resilience in Adversity." The final step was essence construction, which involved interpreting the themes to construct a coherent narrative of teachers' lived experiences, ensuring that the findings remained grounded in participants' voices while responding to the study objectives.

### Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to the highest ethical standards in the conduct of qualitative research. Ethical safeguards were carefully observed throughout the research process to protect the dignity, rights, and welfare of all participants.

Prior to data collection, formal clearance was obtained from the Schools Division Office of Apayao. This included securing written approval from the Schools Division Superintendent and coordination with school heads and district supervisors. Participants were then

personally approached and invited to take part in the study. Participation was entirely voluntary, and no form of coercion or pressure was applied. Each participant received a clear and comprehensible explanation of the study's purpose, scope, procedures, and expected duration of participation.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before conducting any interviews. The consent form explicitly stated that participants had the right to decline or withdraw from the study at any point without facing any penalty or consequence. Participants were also assured that their responses would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. To preserve anonymity, participants were assigned numerical identifiers in all transcripts and reports, and no identifying personal information was disclosed in the presentation of findings.

Audio recordings of interviews were made only with the participants' prior consent. These recordings, along with written notes and transcriptions, were securely stored in password-protected digital folders accessible only to the researcher. All data will be retained for a limited period and will be permanently deleted after the completion of the study and submission of the final manuscript.

Given the sensitive nature of discussing personal and professional challenges, care was taken to foster a respectful and supportive interview environment. The researcher-maintained neutrality and empathy throughout the process, ensuring that participants felt heard, validated, and safe in sharing their lived experiences. Any emotional discomfort encountered during the interviews was acknowledged with appropriate support and the option to discontinue participation if needed.

Lastly, the study observed ethical integrity in data interpretation and reporting. Themes and narratives were grounded strictly in the participants' own accounts, without fabrication or distortion. The study prioritized authentic representation of teacher voices and refrained from making generalized claims beyond the scope of the gathered data. These ethical practices collectively contributed to the trustworthiness, credibility, and moral soundness of the research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Challenges Faced by Teachers in Delivering Education in Remote Barangays

Delivering quality education in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas remains a significant challenge for the Philippine educational system. Through phenomenological inquiry, this section organizes responses into subordinate and subordinate themes with corresponding significant statements from teacher participants, illustrating the lived experiences and hardships of rural teaching assignments.

#### A. Accessibility and Transportation Challenges

##### 1. Physical Demands of Travel

One of the most universally shared challenges among the nine teacher-participants was the physically exhausting nature of travel required to reach their respective schools. During the interviews conducted by the researcher, it became evident that the act of reaching the school site is, in itself, a significant burden that consumes energy and affects the teacher's well-being even before instruction begins.

Teachers assigned to Langnao Elementary School reported the most physically demanding and hazardous conditions. After a short motorcycle ride from the Poblacion to Sitio Surmoy, they must cross a river and then undertake a five to seven-hour uphill hike across

steep, muddy, and unpaved mountain trails. Although road piloting projects are reportedly underway in the area, persistent rainfall frequently triggers landslides, rendering the terrain unstable and treacherous. The researcher noted that these narratives were delivered with a tone of resignation, underscoring how such extreme hardship has been normalized in the teachers' weekly routines.

*Participant 1 stated that "Magdaldalan ami mangrugi Surmoy panda Langnao. Nasulit tutula ya kalsada, awan ngamin lugan. Lasatan mi pay ya payaw. Akkatan mi ampelangan daya abastu se gamit mi. Monawan tala lagud din, malidug ta pamla ata delikado ya kalsada."* ("We hike for more than six hours from Surmoy to Langnao. The trail is all mountain terrain with no roads and no vehicles. We even have to cross a river before the climb. We carry our personal things, sometimes even our rice and canned goods. It is not only tiring, it is dangerous.")

*Participant 2 stated that "Mapan na' iya aksapa Domingo annan Langnao, maggyan na' annan iya makalawas nu dadduma ket manu lawas uh kan makaawid, atan teacher's quarter mi annan. Nasulit talaga se nu sakripisyon la manalam."* ("I leave on Sunday evening or early Monday morning and begin the hike to Langnao. We usually remain there the entire week, staying in the teacher's quarters. It is physically draining. Every step taken feels like a sacrifice.")

*Participant 6 stated that "Innaldaw ya panagtravel mi. 15 minutes nga motor se ami la manalan mangrugi surmouy. Tan ampe bridge ngin ngam nu magudan medyo nali'nag se kakkanansing ya dalanan ata magpangatu ah."* ("Our travel is daily. It's around 15 minutes by motorcycle and another short walk. There is a bridge now to cross the river, which helps, but when it rains, the walk becomes scary and slippery.")

These accounts confirm the findings of Mulkeen and Higgins (2019), who emphasized that physically taxing commutes reduce the willingness of teachers to remain in long-term postings in remote locations. Ganai, Alinsunod, and Guiab (2021) likewise documented that teacher assigned to upland schools in Northern Luzon endure similar terrain-induced exhaustion, leading to irregular attendance and decreased teaching effectiveness.

This means that the journey to school in remote barangays of Calanasan is not simply a logistical challenge but a structural impediment to the consistent delivery of education. These teachers begin their day already fatigued, which directly affects the quality of their instructional delivery, their capacity to engage learners, and their overall professional motivation. As highlighted by UNESCO (2022), equitable access to quality education requires robust investments in infrastructure that support both learners and educators. Without addressing the fundamental barrier of physical inaccessibility, the broader goals of inclusive and sustainable education in remote communities will remain unfulfilled.

##### 2. Weather and Environmental Hazards

The teachers unanimously identified adverse weather conditions as a serious and recurring obstacle. The schools located in remote barangays of Calanasan are surrounded by mountainous terrain and undeveloped paths that are highly susceptible to environmental disruptions. Even a modest amount of rainfall renders footpaths impassable, endangering both travel safety and instructional delivery.

During the interviews, teachers consistently described how sudden weather changes amplify the risks they already endure on a daily basis.



Participant 1 stated that “*Nu magudan, nali’nag se delikado ya kalsada. Napadasan ku pay ya nepirong ngin ay atan da aktu’ uh teaching materials. Awan da iprovide boots se paying mi. Aktuwan mi ya kaya mi gatangan*” (“When it rains, the trail becomes so slippery that even just walking becomes life-threatening. I have experienced slipping down slopes while carrying teaching materials. We do not have umbrellas or boots provided. We bring what we can afford.”)

Participant 4 stated that “*Nu magudan talaga ya kadedelikaduwan. Nali’nag daya batbato. Me’d day pe nuea ya kalsada dikod magapul ami man sabali dalanan mi ngin.*” (“The danger increases during the rainy season. The rocks we step on become loose and slippery. Some parts of the trail collapse, and we have to look for a new path every time.”)

These narratives are consistent with the findings of Ganal, Alinsunod, and Guiab (2021), who reported that remote upland teachers in Northern Luzon are vulnerable to climate-related barriers that severely impact their attendance and teaching routines. Similarly, Vaillant and Rossel (2018) explained that in rural areas across Latin America, changing weather conditions frequently disrupt school operations, with disproportionate consequences for teachers in isolated regions.

This further implies that educational policymakers must begin to integrate environmental risk management within rural school planning. For teachers in Calanasan, the absence of such resilience measures means that their commitment to service is sustained solely through personal sacrifice.

Therefore, the findings suggest that teaching in remote barangays cannot be treated as a standard deployment. It must be viewed as a specialized assignment that involves high-risk conditions and demands specific structural support. Failure to acknowledge and address the role of environmental factors in teacher deployment and learner outcomes risks perpetuating systemic disparities in rural education.

## B. Inavailability of Teaching Resources

### 3. Insufficient Instructional Materials

Another significant challenge expressed by all nine teacher-participants concerns the insufficiency of instructional materials necessary for effective teaching and learning. Teachers consistently reported that the materials provided by the Department of Education are either incomplete, outdated, or unevenly distributed, compelling them to improvise or resort to personal expenditure to fill the gaps.

Participant 1 stated that “*Awan unay books para adaya learners. Nu daddume magshare dala ngin. Nasulit tutula nuwa mapaggigiddan ya reading se seatwork activities nu dadduma.*” (“We do not have enough books for each learner. Sometimes two or three pupils share one copy. It becomes difficult to conduct simultaneous reading or seatwork activities.”)

Participant 6 stated that “*Awan nuwa updated nga learning materials dikod ya usaran mi nuwa ay adat dadan, irevise se imodify mi da la.*” (“We have no access to updated learning materials. We rely on what was given years ago, and we just revise or modify the content ourselves.”)

Participant 9 stated that “*Awan pay available nga posters se storybooks. Magadang ami donasyon ngam awan sa response nu dadduma.*” (“Even posters and storybooks are limited. We ask for donations, but the response is not consistent.”)

The statements reflect a chronic condition of resource inadequacy

that directly affects lesson delivery and learner participation. This confirms the findings of Bautista (2019), who documented that teacher in remote areas often operate in severely under-resourced classrooms, with delays in material distribution and absence of digital tools. Similarly, the study by Manalo and Bartolata (2020) identified that teachers in indigenous and upland communities frequently depend on handmade or donated materials, which do not meet curriculum standards in scope or quality.

The lack of sufficient instructional materials severely undermines the delivery of education in Calanasan’s remote barangays. Teachers are placed in a position where they must choose between improvisation and compromise, neither of which can fully replace a structured and well-resourced learning environment.

### 4. Absence of Digital Tools and Connectivity

All nine teacher-participants expressed concerns regarding the total or near-total absence of digital technologies in their respective schools. This includes not only the lack of computers, projectors, and printers, but also the unavailability of internet connectivity and signal reception. The digital divide is deeply felt in remote barangays, where teachers must fulfill administrative and pedagogical functions without access to basic technological support.

Participant 5 stated that “*Kayat mi pe maexperience daya learners ya digital learning ngam kanyan mi pe ay useless pay da cellphone mi ata awan signal.*” (“We want our learners to experience digital learning, but we cannot offer that here. Even our phones are often useless because of the lack of signal.”)

Participant 7 stated that “*Agyan da ma’ ah iexplore mi daya online teaching tools ngam limited ma’ ya device mi, awan ngamin internet.*” (“We are told to explore online teaching tools, but we do not have any tools to begin with. Limited device and no connectivity.”)

Participant 8 stated that “*Magi’gi’na mi la daya online teaching nga nanda ngam kan mi meapply ata limited ma’ lagud ya resources mi. Behind ami talaga ngin.*” (“We only hear about digital classrooms in webinars, but in our school, with the limited technological tools, it is impossible to have such. It feels like we are being left behind.”)

These reflections mirror the digital access gap highlighted in the study of Lock, Budgen, and Lamm (2020), which concluded that rural teachers suffer disproportionately from the lack of technological infrastructure, placing them at a disadvantage in administrative performance and instructional delivery. This means that teachers in the remote barangays of Calanasan are unable to participate meaningfully in twenty-first century instructional innovations.

UNESCO (2022) advocates for digital inclusion as a foundation for equitable education. The lack of basic technology in Calanasan’s barangay schools suggests that digital exclusion is not a temporary inconvenience but a persistent systemic inequality. Without immediate and deliberate intervention, learners in these areas will continue to lag in technological literacy, digital skills development, and academic preparedness for higher levels of education.

### 5. Dependence on Improvisation and Personal Funds

In the absence of sufficient instructional materials and digital tools, the teachers interviewed unanimously shared their experiences of improvising teaching aids and personally financing school needs. This theme emerged strongly across all three schools, underscoring the reality that teachers in remote barangays are often expected to serve as both educators and material providers. Despite the lack of

institutional resources, teachers demonstrate initiative and creativity to fulfill their instructional responsibilities.

*Participant 1 stated that “Magreuse ami papel se plastic materials para adaya learning materials. Magitugot nak pe manila paper nuwa ata awan mi ma’ regular nga supply.”* (We reuse scrap paper, old newspapers, and even plastic wrappers to make learning materials. I also bring Manila paper from my own pocket because the school cannot provide it regularly.)

*Participant 9 stated that “Agdawat wenu agbulod kami nukwa from other schools. Ngem haan nga always ket adda sun ga kapilitan agusar kami ti personal money mi tapnu lang adda usaren mi iti uneg ti klase.”* (Sometimes we borrow from each other or from nearby schools, but it is not always possible. Many times, it is our own money that keeps the class running.)

These lived accounts reflect a structural issue wherein teachers in remote schools are compelled to subsidize public education with personal funds. This finding supports the analysis of Bautista (2019), who noted that educators in underserved areas of Mindanao routinely spend out of pocket for instructional and operational needs due to insufficient allocations. Similarly, the study by Ganal, Alinsunod, and Guiab (2021) in Northern Luzon found that teachers in upland schools invest personal resources to compensate for the delays and inadequacy of supplies from central offices.

The dependence on teacher improvisation and personal funding reveals a deeper structural imbalance within the public education system. While teachers in Calanasan have demonstrated remarkable commitment and resilience, this informal mechanism of coping cannot be allowed to persist without long-term consequences. Policy reforms must include the proper budgeting and timely provision of instructional supplies, along with reimbursement systems or classroom grants for remote educators. Only then can the quality and fairness of basic education be preserved in geographically challenged settings.

#### 6. Dilapidated or Incomplete Classroom Facilities

All nine teacher-participants described the condition of their classroom infrastructure as either severely deteriorated or makeshift in nature. These structural inadequacies include damaged roofs, unstable flooring, worn-out chalkboards, poor ventilation, and insufficient storage. The overall physical learning environment was reported to be unsafe, overcrowded, or lacking in basic facilities, resulting in a negative impact on both teaching delivery and learner engagement.

*Participant 1 stated that “Ti room ku ket daan ken damaged. Nu agtudo, agtudo met ti uneg ta adu abut na ti atep nan, dikad kapilitan nga coverak ti plastic nukwa dgiti libro kn other teaching materials.”* (The room we use is already old and damaged. During strong rains, water leaks through the ceiling. We just cover our things with plastic and continue teaching.)

*Participant 2 stated that “Atan dadal se abbut naya room uh. Nagrequest ami repair ngam awan da action.”* (One of the walls is made of old wood, and it already has holes. We have requested repairs, but there is no immediate response. We just adjust.)

*Participant 9 stated that “Nu atan da umbet magmonitor ay mabain ami pay nuwa lalo nu damagan da nu kanya la mayed pam da rooms mi ay irepreport mi ma’ yearly.”* (When we have visitors or monitoring, we feel embarrassed. It is difficult to explain why our classrooms look like that when we have been reporting it for years.)

These narratives highlight the serious deterioration of the learning

environment in remote barangays of Calanasan. These conditions are consistent with the findings of Bautista (2019), who observed that physical infrastructure in remote schools is frequently left unrepaired due to limited funding and inaccessibility. The same concerns were raised by Ganal, Alinsunod, and Guiab (2021), who documented that inadequate classroom undermine instructional effectiveness and compromise learner safety in upland schools.

The implications are both immediate and long-term. On a daily basis, poor facilities reduce teacher motivation, learner focus, and instructional efficiency. The dilapidated and incomplete classroom facilities in Calanasan reflect a long-standing neglect of infrastructural equity in rural education. While teachers and communities continue to show resilience through makeshift arrangements, such conditions are unsustainable. Addressing this issue requires coordinated efforts between the Department of Education, local government units, and partner agencies to prioritize infrastructure development in remote schools as part of basic educational reform.

### C. Low Learner Attendance and Engagement

#### 7. Inconsistent Attendance due to Distance and Household Duties

All teacher-participants reported that learner attendance in their schools remains inconsistent and heavily influenced by both geographic and socioeconomic factors. One of the primary reasons cited was the long distance that children must travel daily to attend classes. In many cases, children walk alone through difficult terrain or across rivers, often arriving tired or late. In addition, learners in these barangays are frequently assigned household or farm responsibilities, especially during planting and harvesting seasons, which regularly interfere with their attendance.

*Participant 1 stated that “Adayyu gamin balbalay da dadduma nga learners. Manalan da pam nuwa. Atan pe bamboo-made bridge nga lasatan da. Dikod nu magudan, marigatan da talaga umbet school.”* (“Many of our pupils live far from the school. Some walk for more than an hour through trails and old bamboo-made bridge. During rainy days, they are hard-up in coming to school because the bridge is slippery and is too dangerous to cross.”)

*Participant 8 stated that “May mga bat ana nag-iigib pa ng tubig at nagluluto pa bago pumunta sa school. Kaya sila nalelate at minsan, nakakatulog pa sila sa klase.”* (“We have pupils who are responsible for fetching water or cooking meals before coming to school. This delays their arrival, and sometimes they fall asleep during class.”)

These experiences confirm the findings of Ganal, Alinsunod, and Giab (2021) found that distance from school and economic necessity are significant barriers to consistent learner participation in remote areas of Northern Luzon.

This means that attendance issues in these barangays are not merely disciplinary or attitudinal in nature but are deeply embedded in the learners’ socioeconomic realities. It implies that educational access is not solely a function of school availability but is also contingent upon household labor demands, parental perspectives on schooling, and the physical feasibility of daily attendance.

The inconsistency of learner attendance in remote barangays is a manifestation of broader structural inequalities. It reflects a misalignment between educational expectations and the economic and cultural contexts in which learners live. Addressing this issue requires multifaceted responses that consider not only school-based strategies but also broader community and household dynamics that shape learner behavior.

### 8. High Rates of Absenteeism linked to Poverty

Teacher-participants repeatedly cited poverty as a root cause of persistent learner absenteeism. Learners from remote barangays often face financial hardships that limit their ability to attend school consistently. The lack of basic necessities such as food, school supplies, shoes, and appropriate clothing directly contributes to sporadic attendance, while indirect effects such as hunger, fatigue, and emotional distress further diminish their capacity to participate in school activities.

*Participant 1 stated that “Da dadduma learners ay akkan da magsira se mamasu nu dadduma. Tuya nu mabisin da ay masapa da magawid se la akkan da maalbets nuwa kinabigatan na.”* (Some of our pupils come to school without breakfast. Others do not have lunch. If they get too hungry, they go home early or do not come the next day.)

*Participant 3 stated that “Tumulung ami ampe ngam nakaru talaga ya sitwasyon da iddi. Nu dadduma ay magabsent da sen matulungan da la da parents da adaya dadduma nga ubra I balay wenu maglau da pe gulay.”* (We try to help when we can, but the poverty in this area is deep. Sometimes they are absent for days because they have to join their parents in other chores or selling vegetables.)

*Participant 4 stated that “Atan pay isa pupil uh nga kan naalbet school ata awan da anan. Kan na anu kaya magdaldalan school ata awan naggyan na sinay na.”* (One of my pupils missed class for an entire week because their family had no rice. She told me she could not walk to school with an empty stomach.)

These narratives are consistent with the findings of Bautista (2019), who documented the cyclical relationship between poverty and educational participation in remote areas of Mindanao. Likewise, Manalo and Bartolata (2020) underscored that poverty remains the most pervasive barrier to inclusive education, particularly in communities where basic social services are limited or absent.

This means that learner absenteeism in Calanasan's remote barangays is not a matter of personal unwillingness but of systemic deprivation. It implies that unless the socioeconomic conditions of families improve, schools alone will be unable to sustain regular learner participation. Poverty undermines education not only through the absence of physical resources but also through the presence of emotional and cognitive stress that impairs learning readiness.

### 9. Limited Parental Involvement

Teacher-participants unanimously indicated that a lack of sustained parental involvement is a significant factor affecting learner attendance and engagement. While some parents demonstrate support in school-community activities, this participation is often inconsistent, reactive, and focused only on special events or compliance with requirements. Teachers observed that most parents do not regularly check on their child's academic performance, do not attend parent-teacher meetings, and seldom visit the school outside scheduled distribution days or emergencies.

*Participant 1 stated that “Mostly gamin parents ay umbet dala school nu umbet da maggala' modules wenu feeding. Kan da pay nuwa imonitor ya performance da annana' da se kan da pe magattendar nuwa meeting.”* (Most parents only come when they need to get something like modules or feedings. They do not ask about their child's performance or even attend meetings.)

*Participant 2 stated that “Nu atan nuwa conference ay adu latta ya akkan mahalbet. Busy da anu sa da la maalbets ngin nu atan talaga problema.”* (We try to invite parents for conferences, but many do

not come. Some say they are busy, while others do not see the need unless there is a problem.)

*Participant 8 stated that “Quarterly ami magpameeting ngam most of the time ket fifty percent latta ya attendance. Kan da anu mapanawan da ubra da.”* (We hold meetings at least once per quarter, but most of the time attendance is fifty percent. Some say they cannot leave their work.)

These accounts are consistent with the findings of Manalo and Bartolata (2020), who noted that in marginalized and indigenous communities, economic pressures and limited educational backgrounds contribute to low parental engagement in schooling. Similarly, the work of Bautista (2019) emphasized that in remote areas, parents often perceive education as a teacher-only responsibility, resulting in minimal home-based academic reinforcement.

Limited parental involvement remains a silent but pervasive barrier to learner engagement in remote barangays. While the teachers in Calanasan continue to shoulder the burden of learner development, the absence of family support hinders continuity, reinforcement, and behavioral accountability. Enhancing parent-school collaboration must become a central strategy for improving attendance, academic monitoring, and learner resilience in geographically isolated contexts.

### Adaptive Strategies Employed by Teachers to Overcome Challenges

Delivering education in remote contexts requires not only endurance but also strategic adaptation to survive the compounding limitations of isolation, inadequate infrastructure, and scarce resources. The following are the adaptive strategies developed and employed by teachers in the remote barangays of Calanasan, Apayao.

#### 1. Physical and Mental Resilience Built Through Routine

One of the most prominent themes that emerged from the interviews was the development of both physical and mental resilience among teachers through repeated exposure to the hardships of teaching in remote areas. Over time, teachers reported adjusting to the rigorous conditions of daily travel, poor infrastructure, limited materials, and multi-role responsibilities. This adaptation was not necessarily a result of institutional support, but rather of internal coping mechanisms and the necessity to normalize their reality for the sake of professional duty and learner welfare.

*Participant 1 stated that “Itu damu talaga nasulit ngam part na routine uh win tatta. Magrubwar na' iya gabi Saturday se na'la mapan iya Sunday morning. Maggyan ami iya teacher's quarter the whole week wenu nasuru' pay. Nasanay na' la ngin.”* (At first, it was very difficult, but now it has become part of my routine. I prepare my things every Saturday night, hike early Sunday, and stay in the teacher's quarter the whole week or more. You just get used to it.)

*Participant 2 stated that “Netrain mi ya bagbagi mi ngin nga maluag masapa se magready iya adaddu nga dalanan. Parte yanin naya biag mi nga teachers iddi Langnao.”* (We train ourselves to wake up early, to be emotionally prepared for the long hike, and to expect the unexpected. It is no longer a shock. It is already part of our life as teachers here.)

These responses reflect a common psychological and behavioral adaptation among teachers, consistent with the findings of Lock, Budgen, and Lamm (2020), who identified that educators in rural Australia often build emotional endurance and psychological resilience over time, especially when structural challenges remain



unaddressed. Similarly, the study by Bautista (2019) noted that rural Filipino teachers develop habitual coping mechanisms through constant exposure to stressors, eventually internalizing the struggle as part of their professional identity.

The physical and mental resilience displayed by teachers in the remote barangays of Calanasan reveals the depth of their professional commitment. While such strength ensures the delivery of education under adverse conditions, it must not absolve institutions of their responsibility to improve those conditions. The role of educational governance must be to transform resilience from a survival mechanism into a foundation for sustainable support, development, and professional well-being.

## 2. Use of Locally Sourced and Recycled Materials for Teaching

Faced with persistent shortages of instructional resources, all nine teacher-participants reported developing creative strategies centered on the use of locally available and recycled materials. These improvisations were not only a response to scarcity but also a demonstration of the teachers' commitment to delivering meaningful instruction despite the limitations of their teaching environments. The materials were often gathered from the community, donated by parents, or personally crafted from discarded objects. The practice has become routine and, in some cases, institutionalized as a school-level norm.

*Participant 1 stated that "Magusar ami box, plastic wrappers se newspapers sen maubra ami flashcards, charts se posters. Kulayan mi da nuwa adat buna nga crayons."*(We use old boxes, plastic wrappers, and newspapers to make flashcards, charts, and posters. We color them using our children's leftover crayons.)

*Participant 2 stated that "Magsapul na' nuwa karton wenu datu daan supplies. Pagubraan ku storybook se visual aids. Pi'piya la yanin oray time-consuming ngam iya awan talaga."*(I go around and find for used cartons and old supplies. These become storyboards or visual aids. It is time-consuming, but it is better than having none.)

*Participant 6 stated that "Nu magpabilang kami, magusar ami bottles, plastic caps wenu bato. Nu magpasurat ami pe, magusar ami used folders se used bondpapers."*(We collect used bottles, bottle caps and stones to teach counting. For writing practice, we use old folders and reprint worksheets on the back.)

*Participant 9 stated that "Kan ami la umasa adaya umbet supplies ngin. Nu sonan mi dayan mabayag, maboring daya annana' dikod maginovate ami la ngin."*(We cannot wait for official supplies. If we do not improvise, our learners will be bored, and the class will be passive. We must innovate constantly.)

These narratives align with the findings of Bautista (2019), who reported that teachers in resource-deprived schools in Mindanao frequently adopt grassroots-level innovations to compensate for the absence of standardized materials.

This means that instructional delivery in Calanasan's remote schools is sustained through the ingenuity and labor of the teachers themselves. It implies that while curriculum content is centrally designed, its implementation in disadvantaged contexts depends heavily on local adaptation and material improvisation. The implications of this strategy are both positive and problematic. On one hand, it fosters teacher creativity, contextualized learning, and community engagement. Learners are exposed to culturally relevant and locally meaningful content that enhances their connection to the learning experience. On the other hand, the absence of standardized, high-quality resources raises concerns regarding curriculum fidelity,

instructional equity, and assessment validity.

Moreover, while the strategy reveals the resilience and adaptability of teachers, it also underscores a systemic deficiency in resource allocation. Improvisation is often celebrated as innovation, but in reality, it is a compensatory response to an ongoing failure to equip classrooms adequately. Manalo and Bartolata (2020) emphasized that educational equity should not rely on teacher sacrifice or resourcefulness but must be supported through institutional investment and strategic planning.

The use of locally sourced and recycled teaching materials in remote barangays reflects a profound level of professional dedication. While this practice contributes positively to learner engagement and instructional delivery, it should not be viewed as a long-term substitute for the provision of complete and standardized educational resources. Institutional systems must recognize and reinforce these teacher-led strategies through structured support, capacity building, and responsive resource distribution mechanisms.

## 3. Establishing Learning Routines that Maximize Limited Time

Given the irregularity of learner attendance and the time constraints caused by travel challenges and unpredictable weather, all nine teacher-participants reported establishing well-structured learning routines to maximize instructional time. These routines are designed not only to maintain discipline and focus but also to ensure that essential competencies are delivered efficiently, especially during days when learner turnout is complete. The teachers emphasized the importance of flexible pacing, prioritization of key lessons, and time-conscious classroom management strategies.

*Participant 1 stated that "Mangrugi ami sigud iya klase nuwa. Awan la da greetings ngin se kan mi la sonan daya late ngin. Imaximize mi ya oras nuwa ata baka atan da man awan ngin kinabigatan na."*(We begin class immediately. There is no time for long greetings or waiting for late arrivals. We use every minute because some pupils might not return the next day.)

*Participant 2 stated that "Ponaan ku daya core subjects ngin iya aksapa dikod nu napigsa man ya udan I gidam, atleast ket nalesson mi ngin nuwa daya importante."*

("I always start with the most important lessons in the morning. That way, if it rains in the afternoon or learners need to go home early, the core subjects are already covered.")

*Participant 5 stated that "Mag-eestablish talaga ako ng routine. Tinetrain ko sila na ifollow yung schedule para makapagfunction parin kahit kulang sa materials."*

("Routine brings order. Without it, the learners become restless. We train them to follow schedules so they can function even if we are short on materials.")

*Participant 6 stated that "Not sure kasi ang attendance nila daily kaya nag-aadjust parin kami and stick to the schedule."*

("Each day is uncertain. There might be ten learners today, then only five tomorrow. We always adjust, but we stick to the schedule as much as we can.")

These testimonies affirm the findings of Ganal, Alinsunod, and Guiab (2021), who observed that teachers in upland and remote schools frequently adapt time-management techniques to counteract the unpredictability of learner attendance. Bautista (2019) also highlighted that remote-area teachers often develop instructional prioritization frameworks to ensure that foundational skills are



consistently reinforced despite shortened class durations and frequent interruptions.

The implications of this strategy are considerable. Learning routines enhance not only academic efficiency but also learner confidence and classroom stability. They allow for differentiated instruction, self-paced learning, and targeted remediation, particularly in multigrade settings where learners operate at various levels of mastery.

However, the overreliance on routine may also pose challenges when unexpected changes occur, such as community events, emergencies, or abrupt weather disturbances. Manalo and Bartolata (2020) emphasized that time maximization strategies in rural schools should be institutionalized through modular planning, flexible scheduling, and curriculum clustering, particularly when teaching conditions limit instructional days. These practices should also be supported through training in adaptive lesson planning and integrated classroom management.

The use of learning routines to maximize limited time reflects the teachers' deep understanding of their classroom dynamics and external constraints. It is a proactive strategy that balances efficiency with flexibility and contributes significantly to instructional effectiveness in remote schools.

#### 4. Community Involvement in School Activities

Despite the limited involvement of parents in day-to-day academic monitoring, all nine teacher-participants acknowledged the role of the broader community in supporting school operations. Teachers described how barangay officials, elders, and other residents contribute labor, materials, and moral support during events, repair works, and occasional resource shortages. Although community involvement is not institutionalized, it emerges through bayanihan or mutual cooperation, often initiated by teachers who mobilize local support to address pressing needs.

*Participant 2 stated that "Nu Brigada Eskwela, umbet nuwa da parents magdalus, magippiya ada tugaw se magpinta. Mari'na mi ya suporta da iya school."*(uring Brigada Eskwela, the parents come to help clean the school, repair chairs, and paint walls. It is one of the few times we really feel supported.)

*Participant 6 stated that "Mag-invite ami nuwa ada la'lakay wenu ba'bakat nga magexplain nuwa ada local topics. Parte nayadin ya panangisuru mi nu dadduma."*(We sometimes invite elders to tell stories or teach local crafts. It becomes part of our lesson and helps connect the school to the community.)

*Participant 9 stated that "Oray kan da maatulung every day, atlis atan da latta pe nu kailangan mi aggida. Malpractice pam talaga ya bayanihan iddi."*(Even if they cannot help every day, the community is willing to assist when we are in need. That spirit of bayanihan is still alive here.)

These examples echo the findings of Ganal, Alinsunod, and Guiab (2021), who documented that while formal parent-teacher partnerships may be weak in remote schools, informal community alliances are often activated during urgent situations. Bautista (2019) further emphasized that community-based resource mobilization is an essential survival mechanism in areas where public assistance is delayed or insufficient.

The implications of this theme are significant. Community involvement enhances the school's resilience and strengthens social ties. It creates a shared sense of ownership over the educational process, which, in turn, reinforces the school's legitimacy within the

community. However, this reliance on volunteerism and goodwill also reveals the absence of systematized support, particularly for facilities management and material provision.

Manalo and Bartolata (2020) proposed that community engagement in remote schools be formalized through local education councils, barangay-level education committees, and integration into municipal development plans. These mechanisms can help transform sporadic support into sustained partnerships that address infrastructure, nutrition, and resource issues more systematically.

Community involvement in school activities is a vital strategy that enables teachers in remote barangays to bridge gaps in resources, infrastructure, and manpower. While informal, this support is critical in maintaining basic operations and uplifting morale. Institutional frameworks must recognize and reinforce this partnership by providing incentives, capacity-building sessions, and clear channels for collaboration that ensure continuity and sustainability beyond individual initiative.

#### 5. Peer Collaboration and Resource Sharing

Another adaptive strategy employed by teachers in remote barangays is the cultivation of collaborative relationships with their co-teachers. Peer collaboration is seen not only in the sharing of teaching materials but also in the exchange of ideas, co-planning of lessons, emotional support, and division of multigrade instructional tasks. Teachers rely on one another to maintain continuity in instruction, especially when they are the only professionals within several kilometers. This interdependence has evolved into a coping mechanism that reinforces both professional effectiveness and psychosocial resilience.

*Participant 1 stated that "Ap-appat ami la nga teachers annan school dikad magubra ami lessons mi magshinshare ami adaya materials nga atan daami."*(We are only four teachers in our school. We plan our weekly lessons together and share whatever printed materials we have.)

*Participant 4 stated that "Magbibinnulod ami nuwa materials. Nu maawanan na' ink, tumulong nuwa magprint nuwa ya bulon uh."*(We lend each other visual aids and printed modules. If I run out of ink, my co-teacher helps me reprint materials.)

*Participant 8 stated that "Magattend ami seminar nuwa nga laptop wenu cellphone usaran mi, se mila ishare nuwa adaya akkan nakaattend."*(We attend webinars together using laptop or phone. Then we share what we learned with the others who could not attend.)

*Participant 9 stated that "Natibker talaga ya Samahan mi iddi. Man iya kana mi makasurvive ngin nu awan ya tunggal isa daami."*(Our bond is strong because we need each other. It is impossible to survive this job alone in a remote school.)

These lived experiences are consistent with the findings of Maravilla, Reyes, and Ocampo (2021), who noted that collegial collaboration among teachers in geographically isolated schools is a central strategy for addressing professional isolation and instructional overload. Similarly, the study by De Guzman and Castañeda (2020) emphasized that collaboration mitigates the psychological burden and logistical difficulties experienced by teachers in multigrade and resource-deprived schools.

This means that the teaching workforce in remote areas depends as much on interpersonal solidarity as it does on professional competence. It implies that instructional effectiveness in these contexts is not an individual pursuit but a collective effort

characterized by mutual assistance, co-responsibility, and shared professional growth.

De Guzman and Castañeda (2020) recommend the development of regional multigrade teaching networks where educators can exchange resources and best practices. Additionally, training modules that emphasize collaborative pedagogy and co-teaching strategies should be embedded into the professional development programs for teachers assigned in remote contexts.

Peer collaboration and resource sharing among teachers in remote barangays are vital strategies that reinforce instructional delivery and teacher resilience. These partnerships are forged through necessity but are sustained through trust, mutual respect, and professional commitment. Institutionalizing such collaborations will not only improve teaching conditions but will also elevate the overall quality of education in geographically disadvantaged schools.

### **Perceptions of Institutional and Community Support Among Remote Barangay Teachers**

The delivery of basic education in remote barangays not only depends on teacher effort but also on the responsiveness of institutions and communities tasked with providing necessary support. Table 4 presents the varied perceptions of institutional and community support as articulated by teachers in Calanasan, Apayao. These insights, drawn from qualitative interviews, reveal an uneven support landscape marked by appreciation for small gestures, skepticism toward policy applicability, inconsistent local government involvement, and a call for predictable, structured assistance. Through phenomenological analysis, these perceptions shed light on the broader institutional climate within which rural teachers operate.

The first theme, "Appreciation for Minimal but Symbolic Institutional Support," demonstrates how even modest gestures from the Department of Education such as clothing, chalk allowances, or simple text acknowledgments are deeply valued by teachers. These small tokens are interpreted as signs of recognition, contributing to emotional well-being and a sense of worth. Despite their limited material value, they represent acknowledgment in a professional environment often marked by neglect.

However, teachers also expressed a clear "Perceived Disconnect Between Policy and Practice." Centralized education directives, such as standardized lesson plans and training modules, are often incongruent with the realities of remote teaching. Teachers noted that they are expected to comply with online submissions despite the absence of electricity or connectivity, and that many training materials are designed with urban contexts in mind. This misalignment forces teachers to improvise, widening the gap between policy intent and actual classroom practice.

The responses also reflect "Mixed Sentiments Toward Local Government Involvement." Teachers acknowledged that barangays and local governments occasionally provide support such as food rations during school clean-ups or lending equipment for events but the assistance is sporadic and minimal. There is a general sense that education is not a standing priority in local governance, and that schools must compete with other barangay-level needs for limited resources and attention.

Despite this, teachers report the presence of "Strong but Informal Community Support Networks." Community members, including elders and parents, provide ad hoc support, particularly during school activities. However, the absence of formal mechanisms or

regular collaboration undermines the impact of these efforts. Teachers shared that although community help is available, it is often last-minute and uncoordinated, leaving them unprepared and stretched thin.

Finally, the theme "Call for Consistent and Predictable Assistance" encapsulates the overarching sentiment that support must be institutionalized, not improvised. Teachers emphasized that one-time donations or unexpected visits are insufficient. Instead, they called for scheduled and transparent forms of assistance that align with academic calendars and program needs. Predictability would allow for better planning, reduce operational strain, and restore a measure of stability to an otherwise volatile educational environment.

The perceptions highlight the urgent need for system-level coherence and localized policy adaptation. Teachers value institutional presence even symbolically but are disheartened by policies that fail to reflect ground realities. They recognize community support yet also see its limitations without formal structure or sustainability. Strengthening institutional-community-school collaboration, clarifying roles of LGUs in education, and creating localized, need-based planning systems would significantly improve the quality and predictability of support in remote contexts.

These findings align with the work of UNESCO (2023), which emphasizes that recognition and relational engagement are critical components of teacher motivation, especially in isolated areas. The World Bank (2022) similarly argues that localized planning and participatory governance models are essential to align education services with real-world constraints. Tupas and Reyes (2021) also stress that formalizing local support systems through institutional frameworks improves both accountability and the quality of education delivery in rural Philippine schools.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

Teachers in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas encounter numerous interconnected challenges, such as physically demanding travel, harsh environmental conditions, lack of teaching materials, poor infrastructure, and irregular learner attendance due to poverty. These are further aggravated by minimal parental involvement and inconsistent local government support. These obstacles stem from systemic shortcomings in educational access and delivery. Ultimately, teaching in remote barangays relies heavily on teachers' personal sacrifice, unwavering commitment, and resilience, amid ongoing neglect in infrastructure, policy implementation, and equitable resource allocation.

Teachers in remote areas employ innovative and resilient strategies to overcome challenges, including stress management routines, improvised materials, structured classroom practices, community engagement, and peer collaboration. These context-specific adaptations sustain education delivery but arise from necessity and individual effort rather than institutional support. While commendable, the study concludes that continued reliance on such teacher-initiated solutions without formal policy backing places an unfair burden on educators and highlights the urgent need for systemic recognition and support of grassroots innovations.

Teachers appreciate symbolic gestures of support from the Department of Education, such as allowances and recognition, but find them insufficient to address the ongoing challenges of teaching in remote areas. They observe a gap between national policies and the realities of rural schools, with many policies favoring urban contexts. Support from local government units and communities,

while present, is often inconsistent and informal. Teachers advocate for sustained, structured, and needs-based support aligned with the school calendar and developed with input from frontline educators. The study concludes that current institutional and community support lacks the scope and sustainability needed to effectively aid rural education.

### Recommendations

1. The Department of Education, with support from local and national agencies, is urged to officially recognize the studied barangays as Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) to address the harsh conditions teachers face. This designation should come with benefits such as hardship allowances, transport subsidies, and safety gear. Furthermore, infrastructure improvements like better roads and durable footbridges are recommended to ensure safe and consistent access to schools for both teachers and learners.
2. To lessen teachers' dependence on personal resources, the Department of Education is encouraged to establish a targeted resource allocation system for remote schools. This should ensure timely delivery of instructional materials, provision of digital tools like mobile or solar-powered devices, and funding for teacher-made localized teaching aids. Additionally, innovation grants may be created to support and expand existing creative strategies such as recycled-material kits and peer-designed lesson plans.
3. To strengthen institutional and community support, it is recommended that DepEd and LGUs establish barangay-level education committees with clear roles, budgets, and work plans to formalize community participation. These efforts should be complemented by policy revisions that make national mandates more adaptable to remote teaching contexts, including flexible requirements for multigrade teachers and consultations with educators in isolated areas.

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