

Breaking barriers to inclusion: A study on the need for an inclusive learning resource center in Palayan City

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Abstract

This study assessed the necessity of establishing an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) in Palayan City, Nueva Ecija, in accordance with Republic Act No. 11650 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) advocating inclusive education. Using a descriptive-evaluative quantitative design, 116 respondents—including parents, teachers, and LGU social workers—participated in the study via structured questionnaires. The research examined perceptions of access to education, support services, resource allocation, and community inclusion. Results revealed substantial gaps in infrastructure, therapy services, trained personnel, and inclusive community programs. Parents expressed dissatisfaction with current support services ($M = 2.13$), teachers acknowledged the need for more resources and training ($M = 3.08$), and social workers reported limited community inclusion initiatives ($M = 1.94$). Across all groups, the leading challenge was lack of funding, followed by accessibility and inadequate training. These findings affirm the urgent need for an ILRC to centralize services, support professional development, and promote disability-inclusive programs in Palayan City.

Keywords: inclusive education, needs assessment, learning resource center, community inclusion

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1. Introduction

Inclusive education is a fundamental right supported by both national and international mandates. Under Republic Act No. 11650, local government units in the Philippines are required to establish Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs) to provide free, accessible support services for learners with disabilities. These centers are intended to reduce barriers to education by offering programs tailored to the unique needs of marginalized learners, in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that promote equitable and quality education for all.

Despite this legal framework, millions of children—particularly those with disabilities, from rural areas, or disadvantaged backgrounds—remain excluded from education due to poverty, inaccessible infrastructure, lack of trained teachers, and weak program implementation (UNESCO, 2020; UNICEF, 2024). Studies have shown that while numerous laws exist to support persons with disabilities, actual delivery of services remains limited. Existing educational systems often fail to address the needs of students with intellectual or developmental disabilities, and many localities lack inclusive learning environments and essential support technologies.

In response to these ongoing challenges, this study seeks to assess the readiness and specific requirements for establishing an Inclusive Learning Resource Center in Palayan City. It aims to identify existing gaps in resources, infrastructure, and support services, as well as the perspectives of key stakeholders. With this, the following Statement of the Problem is formulated to guide the investigation.

Statement of the Problem - This study aims to assess the needs for establishing an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Palayan City. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

- How may the profile of the respondents be described in terms of parents – sex, age, civil status, monthly income, and occupation; teachers – sex, age, civil status, monthly income, and occupation; and LGU social workers – sex, age, civil status, monthly income, and occupation?
- How may the needs of the Local Government Unit of Palayan City be described in terms of education and programs for the community?
- How may the need for an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) be described in terms of access to education, support services, community inclusion, and resource allocation?
- What are the challenges toward establishing an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC)?

2. Methodology

Research Design - This study employed a quantitative research method, specifically a descriptive-evaluative research design, to determine the needs assessment for establishing an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Palayan City. The descriptive-evaluative design systematically gathers and analyzes measurable data to describe existing conditions and assess the LGU's readiness for inclusive education. As defined by Creswell and Creswell (2018), descriptive research focuses on identifying and describing the characteristics of a group or phenomenon. It answers questions related to “Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How” through data collection methods such as surveys, interviews, and observations. In this study, the researchers utilized survey questionnaires to collect numerical data from targeted respondents, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the current educational needs in the community. The chosen quantitative

approach provided a structured method to evaluate the community’s readiness and resources. The data collected were presented using descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, and weighted mean for interpretation and analysis.

Research Locale - The study was conducted in selected barangays of Palayan City, particularly those near the Municipal Hall—Barangay Singalat, Barangay Atate, and Barangay Caimito. Additionally, two elementary schools with Special Education (SPED) programs were involved: Palayan City Central School and Fort Magsaysay Elementary School. Barangay Atate, the nearest to the Municipal Hall and the most populous according to the 2020 census, and Barangay Caimito, a BECA awardee with 2,553 residents, were among the focal areas. The Municipal Hall is situated in Barangay Singalat. The chosen schools are the only institutions in the city offering SPED, making them significant locations for gathering relevant data.

Respondents of the Study - The study involved three groups of respondents: Parents/Guardians of students currently enrolled in Palayan City schools; Teachers, particularly those with SPED or inclusive education experience; and LGU Social Workers who provide services to families with children with disabilities.

Sampling Procedure - The sampling technique that researchers used is Stratified Sampling, this study has a total number of 116 respondents. According to Dr. Bisht R. (2024), stratified sampling is a sampling method used to divide a bigger population into subgroups or strata, which can then be further used to draw samples using a random sampling method. In doing so, the researchers have the following criteria: (1) Parents - must be a parent or guardian currently enrolled in a school in Palayan City.; (2) SPED/Elementary Teachers - must have experience working with students with disabilities or have undergone training in inclusive education.; and (3) LGU Social Workers - must have experience in providing support to families of children with disabilities is preferred.

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents

Barangay	Parent/Guardian- respondents		LGU social worker-respondents	
	Population	Sample	Population	Sample
Singalat	134	20	7	6
Atate	134	20	7	6
Caimito	134	20	7	4
Total	402	60	21	16

Table 2
Distribution of Population per School

Elementary School	Teacher-respondents	
	Population	Sample
Palayan City Elementary School	30	20
Fort Magsaysay Elementary School	30	20
Total	60	40

Research Instrument - The main research instrument was a survey questionnaire, validated by experts in the field of special needs education. It was developed based on the CIPP Model (Context, Input, Process, and Product), ensuring that the needs of the community, available resources, and expected outcomes of the ILRC were addressed. The questionnaire was composed of 49 items, divided into four parts: demographic profile of respondents, needs of the LGU of Palayan City, need for an inclusive learning resource center, and challenges toward establishing an ILRC. To ensure reliability, the instrument was pilot-tested with selected respondents from Palayan City’s LGU. Feedback and statistical tools were used to refine the instrument before full deployment.

Data Gathering Procedure - Following the approval of the research title, the researchers sought assistance and permission from the Office of the Mayor of Palayan City. Upon securing approval, they personally administered the questionnaires to the selected respondents—parents, teachers, and LGU social workers. The researchers visited the barangays near the Municipal Hall and explained the objectives and significance of the study to the participants. Clear instructions were provided to ensure accurate completion of the questionnaire, and participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

Data Analysis Techniques - To analyze the gathered data, the following statistical tools were used:

- **Frequency and Percentage:** Used for describing the demographic profiles and challenges (SOP 1 and 4). Frequency refers to the number of times a response appears, while percentage converts this into a proportional representation out of 100 (Serway & Jewett, 2018; Bluman, 2018).
- **Weighted Mean:** Applied to analyze the perceived needs of the LGU and the ILRC (SOP 2 and 3). According to Wais (n.d.), the weighted mean gives more importance to data with higher relevance by multiplying values with corresponding weights before averaging.

The interpretation of the results was guided by Likert scales, as presented below:

Table 3

Likert Scale for LGU Needs

Scale	Mean Range	Description	Interpretation
4	3.25 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	LGU effectively meets the community's needs (e.g., education, health, programs).
3	2.50 – 3.24	Agree	Moderate satisfaction; improvements may still be required.
2	1.75 – 2.49	Disagree	Noticeable gaps in community services; actions needed.
1	1.00 – 1.74	Strongly Disagree	Significant shortcomings; urgent intervention needed.

Table 4

Likert Scale for ILRC Needs

Scale	Mean Range	Description	Interpretation
4	3.25 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	High need for ILRC to address access, inclusion, and resources.
3	2.50 – 3.24	Agree	Recognizes ILRC importance but suggests current efforts may be partially sufficient.
2	1.75 – 2.49	Disagree	Doubts about urgency or satisfaction with current alternatives.
1	1.00 – 1.74	Strongly Disagree	ILRC considered unnecessary in the current context.

3. Results

Table 5

Profile of Parents

Age	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
20 years old and below	0	0
21-30 years old	14	23.33
31-40 years old	18	30
41-50 years old	12	20
51-60 years old	16	26.67
61 years old and above	0	0
<i>Total</i>	60	100
Civil Status		
Single	16	26.67
Married	42	70
Widowed	2	3.33
Separated	0	0
<i>Total</i>	60	100
Civil Status		
Php 10,000 and below	40	66.67
Php 10,001 - 20,000	13	21.67
Php 20,001 - 30,000	7	11.67
Php 30,001 - 40,000	0	0
Php 40,001 - 50,000	0	0
Php 50,001 - and above	0	0
<i>Total</i>	60	100

Table 5 ... continued

Occupation	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Self-Employed	16	26.67
Private Employee	10	16.67
Government Employee	6	10.00
Business Owner	5	8.33
Unemployed	23	38.33
<i>Total</i>	60	100

The demographic profile of parent respondents reflects a community that is predominantly composed of mature adults, with 30% aged 31–40 and 26.67% aged 51–60. These age groups typically exhibit increased awareness of their children's developmental and educational needs, which positions them as important stakeholders in supporting inclusive education. The majority (70%) are married, which, according to UNICEF (2024), often translates to a more stable and involved family structure—an important factor for sustaining a child's participation in inclusive programs. However, socioeconomic conditions are a major concern. A significant 66.67% of parents reported earning ₱10,000 or less per month, and 38.33% are unemployed. This financial hardship likely limits their ability to access specialized educational services such as private therapy, assistive technologies, or even transportation to distant SPED centers. UNESCO (2023) emphasizes that financial insecurity remains one of the primary barriers to equitable access to education for children with disabilities, especially in low-income and rural communities. The occupational data reinforces this issue, revealing that only 10% are government employees and 16.67% are private employees, further confirming the limited economic resources available. These findings strongly suggest the urgent need for the establishment of a local, government-supported Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) in Palayan City to ensure that children with special needs receive appropriate, accessible, and affordable support services.

Table 6
Profile of Teachers

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	6	15
Female	34	85
<i>Total</i>	40	100
<i>Age</i>		
20 years old and below	0	0
21-30 years old	9	22
31-40 years old	14	30
41-50 years old	8	20
51-60 years old	9	27.5
61 years old and above	0	0
<i>Total</i>	40	100
<i>Civil Status</i>		
Single	11	27.50
Married	27	70
Widowed	2	2.50
Separated	0	0
<i>Total</i>	40	100
<i>Monthly Income</i>		
Php 10,000 and below	1	2.50
Php 10,001 - 20,000	6	15
Php 20,001 - 30,000	3	7.50
Php 30,001 - 40,000	20	50
Php 40,001 - 50,000	10	25
Php 50,001 - and above	0	0
<i>Total</i>	40	100
<i>Occupation</i>		
SPED Teacher	4	10
General Teacher	34	85
Others	2	5
<i>Total</i>	40	100

Teacher respondents are overwhelmingly female (85%), with most falling into the age groups of 31–40 (30%) and 51–60 (27.5%). These demographics suggest a workforce with a balanced mix of both energetic mid-career educators and more experienced mentors who could potentially contribute to the implementation of inclusive education strategies. A large percentage (70%) are married, implying that their lived experiences may be closely aligned with those of the parents in the community, potentially fostering shared advocacy for inclusive practices. Economically, teachers fare better than parents: 50% earn between ₱30,001–₱40,000, and 25% earn ₱40,001–₱50,000. However, despite the relative financial security, the data reveals a critical shortage in specialization—only 10% are Special Education (SPED) teachers. This lack of trained SPED professionals is a well-documented barrier to inclusive education. As noted by the Department of Education (DepEd, 2022), the shortage of trained teachers in special and inclusive education remains a national challenge, particularly outside urban centers. UNESCO (2021) further highlights that training and professional development are key components in ensuring the success of inclusive education policies. Therefore, the data justifies the need to establish an ILRC in Palayan City—not only to provide services to learners but also to support the professional development of teachers in inclusive education.

Table 6
Profile of LGU Social Workers

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	4	25
Female	12	75
<i>Total</i>	16	100
<i>Age</i>		
20 years old and below	0	0
21-30 years old	2	12.50
31-40 years old	3	18.75
41-50 years old	7	43.75
51-60 years old	1	6.25
61 years old and above	3	18.75
<i>Total</i>	16	100
<i>Monthly Income</i>		
Php 10,000 and below	14	87.50
Php 10,001 - 20,000	2	12.50
Php 20,001 - 30,000	0	0
Php 30,001 - 40,000	0	0
Php 40,001 - 50,000	0	0
Php 50,001 - and above	0	0
<i>Total</i>	16	100
<i>Occupation</i>		
Barangay Welfare Officer	0	0
Barangay Social Worker	9	56.25
Others	7	43.75
<i>Total</i>	16	100

The LGU social workers in the study are mostly female (75%) and largely fall within the 41–50 age range (43.75%), suggesting a relatively experienced group of professionals. Age and gender distributions are consistent with national trends in the social work field, where women often dominate caregiving and social support roles (DSWD, 2023). Despite their experience, however, the clear majority (87.5%) earn ₱10,000 or less monthly, reflecting economic constraints like those of the parent respondents. This financial limitation could impact their ability to consistently deliver outreach services or advocate for more comprehensive inclusion programs, especially in remote barangays. Most social workers identified themselves as barangay social workers (56.25%), which implies close interaction with families and a deep understanding of community-level issues. However, the capacity of LGU social workers to implement inclusive education programs effectively is often constrained by lack of training and institutional support. According to UNICEF Philippines (2023), local service providers often work under high caseloads with minimal resources, impeding the effectiveness of well-intentioned national mandates. Therefore, establishing an ILRC in Palayan City could serve as a centralized support hub not only for learners and families but also for front-line professionals like social workers, helping bridge service delivery gaps and strengthening the overall social support system.

Table 7
Educational Needs of the LGU of Palayan City According to Parents

	Statements	Mean	Verbal interpretation
1	There are well-trained teachers who support the needs of learners with disabilities.	2.33	Disagree
2	There are special programs to help learners with disabilities.	2.93	Agree
3	There are enough schools in Palayan City that accommodate learners with disabilities.	1.55	Strongly Disagree
4	Learners have access to enough learning materials like books, visual aids, and audio supports.	2.23	Disagree
5	Schools provide extra support, like mentoring or tutoring, for learners with disabilities.	1.85	Disagree
6	There are school facilities like clinics and emergency services to ensure the safety of learners with disabilities.	1.95	Disagree
7	The local government provides scholarships for learners with disabilities.	2.6	Agree
	General Mean	2.21	Disagree

The results reveal a clear perception among parents that the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Palayan City is not adequately meeting the educational needs of learners with disabilities, as reflected in the general mean of 2.21, which corresponds to the interpretation “Disagree.” This indicates that parents perceive significant gaps in teacher training, facilities, learning resources, and support services. Notably, the lowest-rated item was the availability of schools that can accommodate learners with disabilities, receiving a mean score of 1.55 (Strongly Disagree). This highlights a critical shortage of inclusive schools in the city—a concern that severely limits access to equitable education. According to UNESCO (2023) and UNICEF Philippines (2024), lack of accessible infrastructure and trained personnel remains one of the greatest barriers to implementing inclusive education at the local level. These findings strongly support the urgent need for an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) in Palayan City to centralize services, enhance teacher support, and ensure that all learners—regardless of disability—have access to quality and inclusive education.

Table 8
Needs in Programs for Community of LGU of Palayan City in Establishing an Inclusive Learning Resource Center According to LGU Social Worker

	Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1	The LGU collaborates with NGOs on teacher training, inclusive education, and school infrastructure.	2.43	Disagree
2	Community stakeholders, including social workers, are involved in educational planning.	2.62	Agree
3	Community-based rehabilitation programs, such as therapy and social services, are available for learners with disabilities.	1.43	Strongly Disagree
4	The LGU offers scholarships, financial aid, and disability awareness campaigns.	2.56	Agree
5	Community centers have SPED centers, resource centers, and libraries provide inclusive learning opportunities.	1.5	Strongly Disagree
6	The LGU conducts awareness campaigns on inclusive education.	1.18	Strongly Disagree
7	There are public consultations regarding educational programs.	1.87	Disagree
	General Mean	1.94	Disagree

The findings indicate that LGU social workers perceive the Local Government of Palayan City as lacking in community-level programs and support systems for learners with disabilities, as shown by the general mean of 1.94, which falls under “Disagree.” The most critical gap identified is the lack of awareness campaigns on inclusive education, which received the lowest mean score of 1.18 (Strongly Disagree). This suggests that efforts to educate and mobilize the public regarding inclusive practices are either minimal or non-existent. According to UNICEF Philippines (2024) and UNESCO (2023), public awareness is a vital component in transforming attitudes and encouraging inclusive policy implementation at the local level. The lack of such initiatives implies a weak foundation for inclusive education in the community, reinforcing the need for an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) that could serve as both a service provider and an advocacy hub for disability-inclusive development.

Table 9
Teachers' Perspectives on the Need for an Inclusive Learning Center

Statements	Mean	Verbal interpretation
1 An Inclusive Learning Resource Center is essential to support teachers in delivering quality education for all learners.	3.65	Strongly Agree
2 The LGU prioritizes inclusive learning programs, including SPED support and teacher training.	2.42	Disagree
3 Some learners cannot attend classes due to insufficient facilities and resources.	2.82	Agree
4 Special education classes are accessible, but teachers need more resources and training.	3.55	Strongly Agree
5 Alternative learning methods (e.g., UDL, assistive technology) are being introduced, but teachers need more training and resources.	3.40	Strongly Agree
6 Teachers must adapt their strategies to integrate assistive technologies in learning centers.	2.38	Disagree
7 Current educational facilities are not sufficient to meet the diverse learning needs of all students.	3.32	Strongly Agree
General Mean	3.08	Agree

The perspectives of teachers reveal a generally favorable view toward the establishment of an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) in Palayan City, as indicated by the general mean of 3.08, which corresponds to “Agree.” Among all the items, the strongest consensus was observed in the statement, “*An Inclusive Learning Resource Center is essential to support teachers in delivering quality education for all learners,*” which received a mean of 3.65 (Strongly Agree). This highlights that educators recognize the critical role an ILRC would play not only in enhancing learner access but also in equipping them with the necessary tools, training, and resources to address diverse educational needs. However, their responses also reflect gaps in current systems—particularly a lack of training and resource support in integrating inclusive strategies and assistive technologies. These concerns are consistent with findings from UNESCO (2023) and the Department of Education (2022), which emphasize that the success of inclusive education is closely tied to institutional support, professional development, and the availability of learning tools. Therefore, the teachers' perspectives strongly affirm the urgent need for an ILRC that can function as both a training hub and a resource center to improve inclusive educational delivery in Palayan City.

Table 10
Need for an Inclusive Learning Resource Center in terms of Support Services According to Parents

Statements	Mean	Verbal interpretation
1 The multidisciplinary team effectively supports teachers in implementing inclusive education.	2.56	Agree
2 Parents receive ongoing training in inclusive education to effectively support their children with disabilities.	2.21	Disagree
3 Therapy services, such as speech, language, and behavioral therapy, are available in the ILRC to support parents in meeting their children's needs.	1.63	Strongly Disagree
4 Psychological counseling services are sufficient in helping parents manage their children's well-being in the classroom.	1.96	Disagree
5 Health services, including mental health counseling and school nursing, are included in the ILRC to assist parents with their children's health needs.	1.91	Disagree
6 The LGU allocates sufficient funds for learning materials to support special education instruction.	2.5	Disagree
7 Peer support programs like mentoring, buddy systems, and tutoring help create an inclusive learning environment.	2.16	Disagree
General Mean	2.13	Disagree

Parents' perspectives underscore a clear concern regarding the lack of adequate support services for learners with disabilities in Palayan City, as reflected by the general mean of 2.13, which falls under the interpretation “Disagree.” The most critical gap identified is the absence of therapy services—including speech, language, and behavioral interventions—within the community, as shown by the lowest mean of 1.63 (Strongly Disagree). This result signals that families are not receiving the professional support needed to address developmental and behavioral challenges faced by their children. According to UNICEF Philippines (2024) and UNESCO (2023), access to multidisciplinary services such as therapy, psychological counseling, and health interventions is essential in building an inclusive education system that supports both learners and their families. The overall findings

indicate that while there is modest recognition of multidisciplinary team support, most parents feel they lack the training, health services, and structured peer support programs necessary to meaningfully engage in their child’s education. These gaps reinforce the urgent need for an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) that can provide centralized, coordinated, and accessible support services to bridge existing deficiencies and promote equitable learning opportunities for all children.

Table 11
Need for an Inclusive Learning Resource Center in terms of Support Services According to Teachers

Statements	Mean	Verbal interpretation
1 The multidisciplinary team effectively supports teachers in implementing inclusive education.	3.35	Strongly Agree
2 Parents receive ongoing training in inclusive education to effectively support their children with disabilities.	3.25	Agree
3 Therapy services, such as speech, language, and behavioral therapy, are available in the ILRC to support parents in meeting their children's needs.	2.00	Disagree
4 Psychological counseling services are sufficient in helping parents manage their children's well-being in the classroom.	2.30	Disagree
5 Health services, including mental health counseling and school nursing, are included in the ILRC to assist parents with their children's health needs.	2.12	Disagree
6 The LGU allocates sufficient funds for learning materials to support special education instruction.	2.35	Disagree
7 Peer support programs like mentoring, buddy systems, and tutoring help create an inclusive learning environment.	3.10	Agree
General Mean	2.64	Agree

The results indicate that teachers generally agree on the need for an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) in Palayan City, with a general mean of 2.64, suggesting a moderate recognition of its importance in terms of support services. The highest-rated item was the presence of multidisciplinary teams effectively supporting inclusive education (M = 3.35, Strongly Agree), highlighting teachers’ confidence in collaborative approaches. However, there are notable deficiencies in key support services, such as therapy (M = 2.00), psychological counseling (M = 2.30), and health services (M = 2.12), all of which received Disagree ratings. These results underscore the urgent need for comprehensive support infrastructure in the ILRC. This aligns with recent literature, including UNESCO (2020) and Nguyen and Mitchell (2022), which emphasize that without adequate support services and resource allocation, inclusive education efforts risk being ineffective and unsustainable.

Table 12
Need for an Inclusive Learning Resource Center in terms of Community Inclusion According to Parents

Statements	Mean	Verbal interpretation
1 The community ensures equal learning opportunities for students with disabilities through inclusion, accessible materials, and non-discrimination.	2.18	Disagree
2 The local government unit actively promotes awareness of inclusive education for students with special needs.	2.56	Agree
3 Public places like transportation, libraries, and sidewalks are safe and accessible for learners with disabilities.	2.16	Disagree
4 Parents are involved in planning and decision-making for their children's education.	2.50	Disagree
5 Community programs like workshops and support groups are available to help support learners with disabilities.	2.50	Disagree
6 Schools organize activities like diversity celebrations, talent shows, and inclusive sports events to support learners with disabilities.	2.46	Disagree
7 The local government promotes acceptance and prevents discrimination by implementing inclusive education policies, programs, and raising awareness.	2.41	Disagree
General Mean	2.40	Disagree

The results reveal that parents generally disagree on the adequacy of community inclusion efforts for learners with disabilities, as indicated by a general mean of 2.40. While there is moderate agreement that the local government unit promotes awareness of inclusive education (M = 2.56), most aspects—such as access to public spaces (M = 2.16), parental involvement in educational decision-making (M = 2.50), and the availability of inclusive community programs (M = 2.50)—fall below satisfactory levels. These findings suggest that despite some efforts, significant gaps remain in building an inclusive community. This supports the observations of

Ainscow (2021) and United Nations reports (2020), which emphasize that inclusive education requires not only school-based interventions but also strong community participation and accessible environments to foster meaningful inclusion.

Table 13

Need for an Inclusive Learning Resource Center in terms of Resource Allocation According to Teachers

	Statements	Mean	Verbal interpretation
1	Insufficient funding for inclusive education limits teachers' access to training, teaching materials, and classroom resources.	3.30	Strongly Agree
2	Ongoing government support is crucial for funding ILRC and specialized teacher training.	3.25	Agree
3	The LGU allocates a budget for SPED programs, but teachers still need more support in implementing inclusive teaching strategies.	3.22	Agree
4	Resource centers help teachers deliver specialized learning for students with disabilities.	3.40	Strongly Agree
5	Additional materials and equipment, like braille and hearing aids, help teachers better support learners with disabilities.	3.52	Strongly Agree
6	Schools provide teachers with assistive learning devices to improve instruction, communication, and engagement.	3.35	Strongly Agree
7	The LGU improves financial planning for special education by allocating funds for teacher training and classroom support.	2.30	Disagree
General Mean		3.19	Agree

The findings indicate that teachers generally agree on the need for an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) in terms of resource allocation, as shown by a general mean of 3.19. Notably, teachers strongly agree that access to additional materials like braille and hearing aids ($M = 3.52$) and resource centers ($M = 3.40$) significantly support inclusive teaching. They also emphasize that schools provide useful assistive devices ($M = 3.35$) and that insufficient funding limits access to training and resources ($M = 3.30$). However, there is disagreement regarding the sufficiency of LGU's current financial planning for special education ($M = 2.30$), indicating a need for more strategic budget allocation. These findings align with Florian and Black-Hawkins (2020), who highlight that effective inclusion depends heavily on access to well-funded, specialized resources and continuous teacher support.

Table 14

Challenges in Establishing an Inclusive Learning Resource Center According to Parents

Challenges in Establishing an ILRC	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Lack of funding	57	20.21
Limited accessibility for students with disabilities	48	17.02
Inadequate teacher training	40	14.18
Weak government support	39	13.82
Insufficient infrastructure	39	13.82
Social Stigma and discrimination	31	10.99
Poor collaboration among stakeholders	28	9.92
<i>Total</i>	282	100

The data reveal that lack of funding is the most frequently identified challenge by parents in establishing an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC), accounting for 20.21% of responses. This is followed by limited accessibility for students with disabilities (17.02%), inadequate teacher training (14.18%), and weak government support and insufficient infrastructure, both at 13.82%. Social stigma and discrimination (10.99%) and poor collaboration among stakeholders (9.92%) were also cited as barriers. These results emphasize that both financial constraints and systemic issues, such as training gaps and infrastructure inadequacies, are significant concerns. According to Sharma et al. (2020), sustainable inclusive education systems must address these multidimensional barriers through collaborative governance, adequate resource allocation, and inclusive policy implementation to effectively meet the diverse needs of learners with disabilities.

Table 15

Challenges in Establishing an Inclusive Learning Resource Center According to Teachers

Challenges in Establishing an ILRC	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Lack of funding	38	18.62%
Limited accessibility for students with disabilities	36	17.64
Inadequate teacher training	31	15.19
Weak government support	30	14.70
Insufficient infrastructure	24	11.76
Social Stigma and discrimination	23	11.27
Poor collaboration among stakeholders	22	10.78
<i>Total</i>	204	100

The data show that teachers identify lack of funding (18.62%) as the primary challenge in establishing an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC), followed closely by limited accessibility for students with disabilities (17.64%) and inadequate teacher training (15.19%). Other significant concerns include weak government support (14.70%), insufficient infrastructure (11.76%), and issues related to social stigma and poor collaboration among stakeholders, which account for 11.27% and 10.78%, respectively. These findings highlight the need for a systemic and well-supported approach to inclusive education. As noted by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2021), sustainable inclusion requires not only adequate funding and teacher preparation but also coordinated efforts across government, schools, and communities to remove physical, attitudinal, and institutional barriers to learning.

Table 16

Challenges in Establishing an Inclusive Learning Resource Center According to LGU Social Workers

Challenges in Establishing an ILRC	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Lack of funding	15	18.75
Limited accessibility for students with disabilities	14	17.5
Inadequate teacher training	13	16.25
Weak government support	11	13.75
Insufficient infrastructure	11	13.75
Social Stigma and discrimination	8	10
Poor collaboration among stakeholders	8	10
<i>Total</i>	80	100

The data reveal that LGU social workers perceive the lack of funding (18.75%) as the most pressing challenge in establishing an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC), followed by limited accessibility for students with disabilities (17.5%) and inadequate teacher training (16.25%). Notably, weak government support and insufficient infrastructure are equally concerning at 13.75% each, while social stigma and poor collaboration among stakeholders each account for 10%. These findings emphasize that while funding is a critical barrier, effective implementation also hinges on training, inter-agency collaboration, and inclusive policy frameworks. According to Sharma et al. (2022), a multi-sectoral and well-resourced approach is essential to overcoming these systemic challenges and ensuring the success of inclusive educational programs.

4. Summary of Findings

The findings reveal that all respondent groups recognize major deficiencies in inclusive education services in Palayan City. Most parents, many of whom are from low-income backgrounds, expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of educational access and support for their children with disabilities. The general mean rating from parents regarding support services was 2.13 (“Disagree”), pointing to an alarming lack of therapy services, psychological counseling, and health provisions. Teachers, while more moderate in their evaluation, indicated a strong need for an ILRC to assist with training, access to resources, and inclusive strategies. Their overall perception was affirmative, with a general mean of 3.08 (“Agree”). LGU social workers, on the other hand, highlighted poor community-level implementation, scoring a general mean of 1.94, which reflects strong dissatisfaction with the lack of awareness campaigns and inclusive facilities. Across all sectors, the most frequently cited challenges were lack of funding, limited accessibility for students with disabilities, inadequate teacher training, weak government support, and insufficient infrastructure. These results consistently point to the urgent necessity of establishing a centralized, well-resourced ILRC to bridge educational gaps and institutional

weaknesses in delivering inclusive education.

Conclusion - The findings of this study make it evident that the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Palayan City is currently not equipped to meet the diverse educational and developmental needs of learners with disabilities. Despite the existence of national legislation, particularly Republic Act No. 11650, which mandates the establishment of Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs), implementation at the local level remains inadequate. The study uncovered significant challenges across several dimensions: lack of funding, poor infrastructure, insufficient therapy and health services, undertrained teachers, and minimal community awareness on inclusive education. These gaps are not isolated concerns but interconnected issues that collectively hinder the city's ability to build an inclusive, equitable learning environment.

Parents, many of whom are economically disadvantaged, voiced strong dissatisfaction with the limited availability of support services—particularly therapy, counseling, and accessible learning facilities. Teachers acknowledged the importance of inclusive education but highlighted their lack of training, resources, and institutional support. LGU social workers, who are central to community outreach and social development, reported minimal collaboration efforts and low prioritization of disability-inclusive programming at the community level. Taken together, the perspectives of all stakeholder groups present a consistent narrative: Palayan City urgently needs an institutional framework that consolidates services and support systems for children with disabilities. The proposed ILRC would serve not only as a center for therapy and education but also as a venue for professional training, parent engagement, resource distribution, and advocacy. More importantly, it would embody the principle of educational equity—ensuring that all learners, regardless of ability or socioeconomic status, have the tools and opportunities to thrive.

The establishment of the ILRC is not merely a policy requirement—it is a moral and social imperative. Without such an initiative, the city risks perpetuating cycles of exclusion, marginalization, and underachievement among a vulnerable segment of its population. Therefore, local leaders, educators, families, and community stakeholders must unite in prioritizing inclusive education as a shared responsibility. By investing in an ILRC, Palayan City could lead by example in building a more just, inclusive, and responsive education system for all.

Recommendations

- *Establish an Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) in Palayan City* - The ILRC should function as a centralized hub offering therapy services, assistive learning technologies, psychological and health counseling, as well as teacher and parent training. This will provide equitable access to specialized services currently unavailable to most families in the city.
- *Strengthen training and capacity-building for teachers and LGU social workers* - The LGU should partner with DepEd and accredited SPED institutions to provide regular, structured training on inclusive education strategies, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), behavioral intervention techniques, and assistive technology use. Strengthening human resources ensures that inclusive policies are translated into effective classroom and community practices.
- *Allocate sufficient budget for inclusive education and ILRC operations* - LGU financial planning must prioritize special education. This includes investments in facilities, learning tools (e.g., braille books, speech devices), staff hiring, and maintenance of the ILRC. Transparent and sustained funding mechanisms will ensure continuity and avoid program disruption.
- *Implement regular community awareness and inclusion campaigns* - To reduce stigma and promote acceptance of learners with disabilities, the LGU should conduct public forums, school-based events, and barangay campaigns. These initiatives should be grounded in inclusive values and target both awareness and behavior change, as recommended by UNICEF (2024).
- *Strengthen stakeholder collaboration through inter-agency committees* - A dedicated Inclusive

Education Task Force composed of school heads, SPED coordinators, parents, LGU officers, and civil society organizations should be institutionalized. This body will coordinate planning, implementation, and monitoring of ILRC programs to ensure they are responsive and community-driven.

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