

---

## **Out of School Youth with Special Educational Needs**

**Marry C. Basa**

*Faculty of College of Education, Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University- South La Union Campus,  
Agoo, La Union, 2504, Philippines*

### **ABSTRACT:**

Special Education in the Philippines has caught the attention of society especially in terms of educational needs. This study determined the incidence of out of school youth with special needs in the municipality of Agoo, La Union, Philippines to establish a Municipal Special Education (SPED) Program. The study found out that there are 281 out of school youth with special needs, manifesting various types of exceptionality like autism, intellectual disability, etc, in the different barangay through a descriptive method of investigation. Different assessment procedures were conducted to determine the out of school youth with special needs. It also found out that very few of the parents of the out of school youth with special needs are either college or vocational graduates. The evidence from this study suggests the need to establish and implement a SPED Program as well as the need to put up SPED Center in the only university in Agoo - Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University-South La Union Campus.

**Keywords:** *out of school youth, special education, special educational needs, SPED program, exceptional*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities encourages the enactment of laws and policies upon all its member-states in favor of persons with disabilities with the goal of counting them in everyday life, and at the same time offering equal access to educational services to everyone as what is stated in the advocacy of UN which is to have the right to survival, an opportunity to develop to the fullest, protection from harmful influence, abuse and exploitation, full participation in family, cultural and social life.

It is gratifying to note that Special Education in the Philippines has already developed a state of consciousness in the different sectors of society. It has reached out its concern and sphere of influence to children with special needs such that major laws were enacted aimed to protect their rights and promote their welfare. As citizens of the country they are entitled to the same rights and privileges enjoyed by all. Their dignity as a human person deserves respect like anybody else.

In the fundamental law of the land of the Republic of the Philippines states under Article 13, Sec. 13 for the establishment of special agency for disabled persons for their rehabilitation, self-development and self-reliance, and their integration into the mainstream of society. Article 14, Sec. 1 also articulates the protection and promotion of the rights of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. Furthermore, it can be noted in Sec. 2 (5) for the provision for adult citizens,

the disabled and out-of-school youth with training in civic, vocational efficiency and other skills. This is to ensure that they can contribute to nation-building in spite of their disability, and that they shall be considered as assets, not as liabilities to the society.

Out of school youth with special needs are the focus of this study. The term "exceptional children" includes those with learning disabilities, the giftedness and the talented, those with emotional and behavioral disorders, communication disorders, the auditory and visually impaired, the physically disabled, and those with chronic health impairment and multiple disabilities. In short, these are children who differ significantly from the so-called "normal". With the exception of the gifted and the talented, this group of children experience marked difficulties in learning the basic education subjects, thus, they need a modified or developmentally appropriate curriculum. Those endowed with talent and high potential and whose performance is so remarkable need an enriched curriculum to enable them to optimize their development. Livingstone, (2008) mentioned that the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 has a significant impact upon education today. The former legislation is focused on achievement and quality of educational opportunity, while the special education law emphasizes on access to the general education curriculum, fairness of application and specific parental rights in decision-making. NCLB mandates that reasonable adaptation and accommodation will be provided during testing for the child served by special education programs.

Children with special needs should be given attention and support as provided for by law, legal issuance and school policies. This is a basic right which should be respected and could not be infringed. Art 13, Sec. 13 clearly states that. *"The State shall establish a special agency for a disabled person for their rehabilitation, self-development, and self-reliance, and their integration into the mainstream of society."*

Special Education in the Philippines is anchored on fundamental legal documents that accompanied a chronology of events on the growth and development of the program. The first legal basis for the care and protection of children with special needs was enacted in 1935. Articles 356 and 259 of Commonwealth Act No. 3203 asserted *"the right of every child to live in an atmosphere conducive to his physical, moral and intellectual development"* and the concomitant duty of the government *"to promote the full development of the faculties of every child"*. The word *"child"* is inclusive and non-discriminatory.

From then on, several laws were enacted to protect the welfare of children with special needs. Republic Act No. 5250, "An Act Establishing a Ten – year Teacher Training Program for Teachers of Special and Exceptional Children" was signed into law in 1968. The law provided for the formal training of teachers for the deaf, hard-of-hearing, speech handicapped, socially and emotionally disturbed, mentally retarded and mentally gifted children and youth at the Philippine Normal College and at the University of the Philippines. Furthermore, the 1973 Constitution of the Philippines explicitly states in Section 8, Article XV the provision of *"a complete, adequate and integrated system of education relevant to the goals of national development"*. The constitutional provision for the universality of educational opportunities and the education of every citizen as a primary concern of the government clearly implies the inclusion of education exceptional children and youth.

With these cited laws and issuances as a frame of reference, it is incumbent in every Filipino to be involved in providing attention, assistance, and education to children with special needs.

The identification of out of school youth with special educational needs, therefore, will serve as the *raison d'être* to propose for the establishment of an informal education.

The researcher strongly believes that children with special educational needs will eventually leave SPED centers when this comes, there will be more out of school youth who in one way or another will be called liabilities to the society. It is, therefore, appropriate to look forward to such time, have prepared a program and be ready to accommodate these youth.

## **OBJECTIVES**

This study is designed to establish a baseline data on out of school youth with special needs for the establishment of a SPED program in the municipality of Agoo, La Union, Philippines. Specifically, it aimed to provide data to the following objectives:

1. Determine the profile of exceptional children with special needs in the municipality of Agoo in terms of:
  - Gender
  - Type of exceptionality
2. Determine the profile of parents of out of school youth as to:
  - Age
  - Highest educational Attainment
  - Occupation
  - Gross Family Income
3. Propose and establish a municipal SPED Program based on the findings of the study.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study made use of the descriptive method of investigation. Descriptive studies can yield a plethora of data and information that lead to important recommendations about aspects of education which educators and policy makers may consider interesting and urgent. The main goal of the descriptive research is to describe the data and characteristics about what is being studied. Thus, in this study, the focus of description is on the incidence of out of school exceptional youth in the municipality of Agoo.

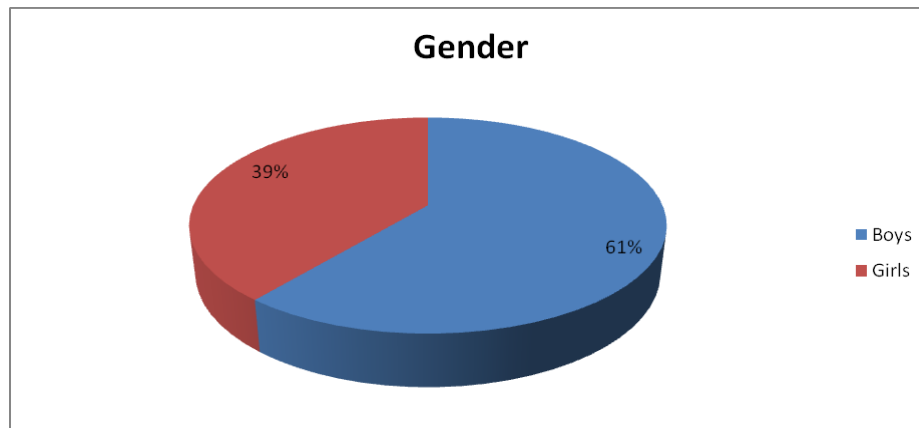
Using the list of out of school youth with special needs of the municipality of Agoo provided by the MSWD as a reference, the questionnaire was administered to the parents of Children with Special Needs (CSN) as respondents of the study. The locale of the study was the 49 barangays, in the municipality of Agoo, La Union, Philippines. Based on the available data from the MSWD, there are 281 out of school youth with special needs.

The survey questionnaire which was formulated by the researcher was the main data-gathering instrument. To establish the content and concurrent validity of the questionnaire, the researcher sought the advice of academics, as to the appropriateness of the items included. The instrument consists of the following information: the profile of the children with special needs in terms of their age, gender, type of exceptionality, type of schooling and their address; the parents' profile as to their age, highest educational attainment, occupation and gross family income. According to Asuncion (2016), the common statistical tools used for descriptive research design are frequency count, percent, and mean.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Obviously as seen in Figure 1, more boys or 61 percent than girls or 39 percent of the total number of child respondents have been identified as having special educational needs. Surprisingly, in all types of exceptionality presented in the table, they score higher than the girls.

**Figure 1. Gender of Out of School Youth with Special Educational Needs**



### Profile of the Children with Special Needs as to Type of Exceptionality

In order to have a concrete basis for the proposed SPED Program in this municipality, the kind of exceptionalities of the children was identified. Although the MSWD record showed the specific exceptionality of each child, the type of exceptionalities was categorized.

Table 1 presents the profile of the children related to their specific exceptionality, as categorized.

**Table1. Profile of the Out of School with Special Needs in Terms of Type of Exceptionality**

Type of Exceptionality	Boys		Girls	
	F	%	F	%
Intellectual Disability	22	8	12	4
Autism	12	4	8	3
Speech Impairment	40	14	25	9
Hearing Impairment	8	3	3	1
Visual Impairment	18	6	12	4
Down Syndrome	12	4	9	3
Multiple Disabilities	9	3	4	1
Specific Health Impairment	5	2	4	1
Cerebral Palsy	16	6	15	5
Physical Disability	29	10	18	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>39</b>

It can be gleaned from the data in Table 1 that Speech Impairment has high insistence with 40 boys or 14 percent and 25 girls or 9percent identified with this disability. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, defines the term “speech or language impairment”

as follows: “(11) *Speech or language impairment means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.*” [34 CFR §300.8(c)(11)]. It was observed that many of the children have a cleft palate, and according to their mothers, they met minor accidents during their pregnancy and this might have affected the unborn child. Children with cleft palate often have problems with feeding and talking. They also might have ear infections, hearing loss, and problems with their teeth. Cleft palate causes the child not to be able to speak clearly and communication with others seems to be difficult for them. The roof of the mouth is called the “palate.” It is formed between the sixth and ninth weeks of pregnancy. A cleft palate happens if the tissue that makes up the roof of the mouth does not join correctly. Among some babies, both the front and back parts of the palate are open. Among other babies, only part of the palate is open. (Center for Disease Control and Prevention).

The least incidence is Special Health Impairment with only 5 boys or 2 percent and 4 girls or 1 percent of the children. These children regularly visit their doctors and are constantly under medication as their impairment is considered chronic. These are the children with any or a combination of the following ailments; asthma, rheumatic heart, weak lungs, epilepsy, etc.

In this study, there were 281 pairs of parents who were interviewed by the researcher in the course of home visitation. In spite of their very busy work schedule, it is inspiring to note that either the father or the mother obliged to answer the questions.

Table 2 presents the profile of the parents as to age.

**Table 2. Profile of the Parents of Out of School Youth with Special Needs in Terms of their Age**

Age Bracket	Father		Mother	
	F	%	F	%
27 and below	16	6	29	10
28 – 30 years old	23	8	36	13
31 – 33 years old	32	11	38	14
34 – 36 years old	43	15	23	8
37 – 39 years old	28	10	52	19
40 – 42 years old	30	11	28	10
43 – 45 years old	15	5	18	6
46 – 48 years old	13	5	18	6
49 – 51 years old	10	4	3	1
52 and above	8	3	3	1
Age not included	63	22	33	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>

The data in the table disclose that the youngest age among the parents is 27 years old and the eldest is 52. Since parents of CSN are still relatively young, their involvement in the program to be established is considered to be very timely to harness their talents and energy, as they are in the prime of their youth. Effective collaboration with parents can be a catalyst for success in their children's educational achievement. (Epstein, 2001) found a strong relationship between parents' involvement in the educational process and parents' advocacy



on behalf of their children. Parents desire better quality services for their children, safe environment, and adaptation or accommodation to programs in inclusive settings, such as physical education, art, or music classes (Fidler, Lawson, & Hodapp, 2003; Ivey, 2004; Lange, Ysseldyke, Lau, & Lehr, 1995). Lange & Lehr (2000) mentioned that parents desire excellence in the education of their children despite their children's individualized learning needs. This finding seems to confirm the Filipino's penchant for the primary of education as a way to improve one's life. Hence, parents generally believe and support the teamwork between the home and the school.

### **Highest Educational Attainment of the Parents**

In order to collect and establish data on the potentials of parents to help in the realization of the proposed SPED Program, their highest educational attainment was gathered and the data presented in Table 3.

Bateman, Barbara, and Herr, Cynthia (2004) believed that many SPED specialists consider Individual Education Programs (IEP) as burdensome lawful papers, strenuously accomplished and rapidly filed, without intention of consuming them. At the same time, many parents experience the IEP development process as intimidating, frustrating and pointless. Too often hours are spent laboring over IEP goals and objectives even when the results are frequently unsatisfactory and non-measurable. Bateman and Herr stressed that measurable goals and objectives can be surprisingly fast to formulate, easy to write and helpful to parents and teachers alike, once the skill has been learned and mastered.

The table also shows that a total of 196 fathers and a total of 211 mothers are educated, thus, the likelihood is high that they can be easily tapped to support the SPED Program. The IEP team is usually composed of SPED teachers, parents, and the CSN themselves, thus, this imperative need must be ascertained. It is worthy to note that, generally, parents of CSN have attained a level of education perceived to make them receptive to present educational demands.

**Table 3. Profile of Parents of Exceptional as to their Highest Educational Attainment**

<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Father</b>		<b>Mother</b>	
	<b>Frequency Count</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Frequency Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Elementary Graduate	12	4	24	9
High School Undergraduate	38	13	57	20
High School Graduate	75	27	57	20
College Undergraduate	46	16	50	18
College Graduate	8	3	10	4
Vocational Graduate	15	5	5	2
Post graduate	3	1	8	3
No answer	85	31	70	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>

### Occupation of the Parents of Exceptional Children

Parents' occupations are possible inputs in the implementation of the proposed SPED program. Without financial support, a program, no matter how lofty and novel its objectives, will not prosper. The occupational profile of the parents of children with special needs is presented in Tables 4.

The data in Table 4 reveal that 139 or 60.43 percent of the parents of CSN have jobs of some sort which guarantee income for their family's needs. The greatest concentration of occupation is on driving public conveyances, and working overseas which could mean that they are better paid than their local counterparts. It is interesting to note that 18 are vendors and carpenters, 16 are fishermen, 12 are government employees, 11 farmers, 6 caregivers, 5 computer technicians and teachers, 4 tutors and 1 lawyer. 4.78 of the parents reported that they do not have a permanent occupation – a case of an "off and on" work. 19.13 percent of the parents apparently are jobless which explains why they did not indicate any occupation at all.

**Table 4: Profile of the Parents of Children with Special Needs in Terms of Occupation**

Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency Count	%
OFW	19	8.26
Government Employee	12	5.22
Computer technician	5	2.17
Carpenter	18	7.83
Driver (Jeep & tricycle)	19	8.26
Fisherman	16	6.96
Farmer	11	4.78
Lawyer	1	0.43
Teacher	5	2.17
Tutor	4	1.74
Caregiver	6	2.61
Dressmaker	5	2.17
Vendor	18	7.83
Housekeeper/plain housewife	36	15.65
No permanent work	11	4.78
Work not indicated	44	19.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>

On the whole, parents' occupations are explorable possibilities to support the SPED program in various ways, once it has been established. The housewives could serve as teacher aides and the drivers may be tapped to fetch the children from their homes and take them back after class. Those who cannot physically serve the program, as they are employed full-time may be tapped for financial assistance.

### Profile of Parents as to Gross Monthly Family Income

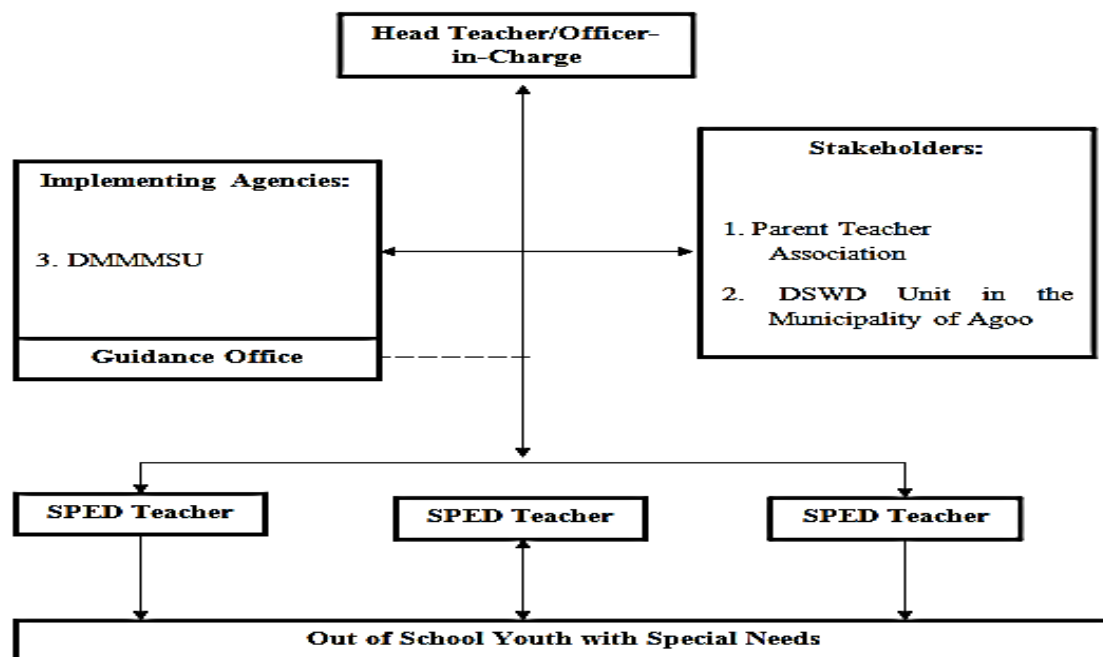
The monthly income of the family usually comes from the parents with some augmentation from other family members who are gainfully employed. It is common knowledge that mothers who are housekeepers usually have no income. This reality has been confirmed

through the interview conducted with them. Mothers were hesitant to declare whether or not they have income from any source. The data gathered on this variable are presented in Table5.

**Table 5. Profile of Parents as to Gross Monthly Income**

<b>Gross Monthly Family Income</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Php 4999 and below	196	70
Php5000- 10000	30	11
Php10001-15000	25	9
Php 15001 -20000	28	10
Above Php20, 000	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>

From the survey, the highest monthly income among the families is Php20,000 and above; with one (1) family reporting it. The majority of the families (196 or 70%) of respondents have a gross income of Php4,999 and below, which demographically speaking, is below the poverty line. This could be the reason why there are so many CSN in the municipality who are out-of-school. It is an accepted fact that a specialized program is the most appropriate educational service for this group of children. Special education is relatively more expensive than general education; thus, if family income does not permit it, parents would rather not send their children to school anymore. Here is the opportunity for stakeholders such as the DSWD and NGOs and implementing partner agencies to show their concern and advocacy for CSN through sponsoring scholarships, grant of allowances, and other incentives. A relevant program for the non-working mothers may also be proposed while they work for their children's development in the proposed SPED program.



**Figure 2. Proposed Organizational Structure of SPED Program**



---

## CONCLUSION

In the light of the foregoing findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

- The Municipality of Agoo in the province of La Union has a sizable number of children with out of school youth with special educational needs to warrant the establishment of a Special Education program.
- The out of school youth identified to have special educational needs manifest varied types of exceptionality.
- Based on the analysis of their profile, the parents of the out of school youth with special needs have very great potential to support the Special Education program, technically, logistically and morally.
- A customized yet flexible curriculum appropriate for every type of exceptionality is an imperative to consider in implementing the SPED program.
- The offering of the Bachelor of Elementary Education, with specialization in Special Education, and a Master's program in Special Education at DMMMSU could serve as a steady source of supply of SPED teachers as well as for training and skills upgrading of SPED Center administrator and staff.
- The relatively favorable findings of this study are substantial enough to rationalize the establishment and implementation of a SPED Program in DMMMSU.

## REFERENCES

- i. Asuncion, R. J. R. (2016). Effects of ADDIE Model on the Performance of BEED Sophomore Students in the Project-Based Multimedia Learning Environment. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach & Studies*, 3(3).
- ii. Bateman, B. D & Herr, C. M. (2006). Writing measurable IEP goals and objectives. (2nd ed.). Attainment Company Inc.
- iii. Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (2008). (<http://www.dredf.org/international/philippines.html>)
- iv. Disability World (2008). ([www.disabilityworld.org](http://www.disabilityworld.org) )
- v. Epstein, J. L. (2001). School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- vi. Evangelista, Lourdes. (1999). Exceptional Psychology. Booklore Publishing Corporation, Lorimar Inc,
- vii. Fidler, D.J., Lawson, J. & Hodapp, R.M. (2003). What do parents want?: An analysis of education-related comments made by parents of children with different genetic mental retardation syndromes. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 28, 196-204.
- viii. IDEA. Special Education. [http://www.coa.gov.ph/ngas/lgu/lgu\\_ngas-c5v1.asp](http://www.coa.gov.ph/ngas/lgu/lgu_ngas-c5v1.asp)

- 
- ix. Lange, C. M., & Lehr, C. A. (2000). Charter schools and students with disabilities: Parent perceptions of reasons for transfer and satisfaction with services. *Remedial and Special Education*, 21, 141–151
  - x. Livingstone, Sonia (2008) Taking risky opportunities in youthful content creation: teenagers' use of social networking sites for intimacy, privacy and self-expression. *New media & society*, 10 (3). pp. 393-411
  - xi. R.A 5250: An Act Establishing A Ten-Year Training Program For Teachers Of Special And Exceptional Children In The Philippines And Authorizing The Appropriation Of Funds Thereof. Retrieved from <http://www.ncda.gov.ph/disability-laws/republic-acts/republic-act-5250/> on December 2016.
  - xii. The Flagship on Education for All and the Right to education for Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion. ([www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org))
  - xiii. The Official Website of the Republic of the Philippines (2008). (<http://www.gov.ph/>)
  - xiv. U.S. Department of Justice: Americans with Disability Act (2008). (<http://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm#anchor65310>)
  - xv. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2008).
  - xvi. United Nations homepage ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org))