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Revitalizing the Philippine education system: Facilitating access and participation to in-service training (INSET) and teacher professional development (TPD)

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Revitalizing the Philippine Education System: Facilitating Access and Participation to In-Service Training (INSET) and Teacher Professional Development (TPD)

*John Paolo R. Rivera, Leih Maruss V. Sinsay-Villanueva,
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Abstract

Teaching quality is deemed one of the foundations of student achievement and institutional performance. With this, linking in-service training (INSET) and teacher professional development (TPD), to student outcomes has been at the forefront of education research. Our inquiry revolves on how to improve accessibility and participation in INSET and TPD programs to improve teaching quality and to revitalize the Philippine education system. We do this by examining accessibility issues, allocation practices, and implementation challenges of INSET and TPD programs. By triangulating data from document reviews with perspectives gathered from key informant interviews with sector experts and focus group discussion with teachers, we highlight key gaps that hinder achievement of intended outcomes. Our findings revealed that while training opportunities exist and needs assessments are in place, outcomes are impeded by inequitable access, inconsistent funding, and a lack of alignment with evolving pedagogical needs. Moreover, logistical barriers, such as geographic constraints and workload concerns, prevent teachers from fully participating in TPD programs. To address these challenges, we presented comprehensive recommendations for the Department of Education (DepEd), policymakers, and educational institutions towards equitable access to INSET and TPD programs through increased funding, integration of digital learning tools, and institutionalization of sustainable training frameworks. Educational institutions can implement school-based professional learning communities, strengthen mentorship programs, and encourage data-driven approaches to professional growth. By strengthening INSET and TPD programs through strategic reforms and evidence-based interventions, the Philippines can cultivate a high-quality teaching workforce capable of addressing the evolving landscape and demands of 21st century education. A renewed commitment to teacher development will not only enhance instructional quality but also pave the way for a more inclusive, innovative, and resilient education system that empowers both teachers and learners.

Keywords: education, in-service training, learning, teacher professional development

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List of Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
ALS	Alternative Learning System
AOL	Assurance of Learning
ARMM	Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
BEIS	Basic Education Information System
BHROD	Bureau of Human Resource and Organizational Development
CALABARZON	Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon Province
CAR	Cordillera Administrative Region
CLMD	Curriculum Learning and Management Division
COVID-19	Coronavirus Pandemic
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSC	Civil Service Commission
DepEd	Department of Education
DRRMS	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service
ECED	Early Childhood Education
EFL	English as Foreign Language
ELLN	Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy
EO	Executive Order
ESAT	Electronic Self-Assessment Tool
ESC	Educational Service Contractual Scheme
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAD	Gender and Development
GASTPE	Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education
GE	General Education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HOTS	Higher Order Thinking Skills
HRIS	Human Resource Information System
HRTD	Human Resource and Training Development
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
ILT	Instructional Leadership Training
INSET	In-Service Training
JHS	Junior High School
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LAC	Learning Action Cell
LMS	Learning Management System
MATATAG	Makabagong Kurikulum, Talino, Tapang, and Galing
MAPEH	Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health
MBHTE	Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education (Bangsamoro)
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services
MSU	Mindanao State University
MOOE	Maintenance and Other Expenses

NAT	National Achievement Test
NEAP	National Educators Academy of the Philippines
NCR	National Capital Region
OBE	Outcome-Based Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PD	Professional Development
PEAC	Private Education Assistance Committee
PFA	Psychological First Aid
PIC	Professional Identification Card
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PLCs	Professional Learning Communities
PLP	Professional Learning Packages
POs	Professional Organizations
PPST	Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers
PRC (Philippines)	Professional Regulatory Commission
PRC (China)	People's Republic of China
RA	Republic Act
RM	Regional Memorandum
RO	Regional Office
RTOT	Regional Training of Trainers
SBM	School-Based Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDO	School Division Office
SED	Schools Effectiveness Division
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SF7	School Form 7 (DepEd)
SHS	Senior High School
SOR	Science of Reading
SPED	Special Education
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SY	School Year
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TLE	Technical and Livelihood Education
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
TOT	Training of Trainers
TDNS	Teacher Development Needs Study
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America

Revitalizing the Philippine Education System: Facilitating Access and Participation to In-Service Training (INSET) and Teacher Professional Development (TPD)

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1. Introduction

Teacher quality is a critical driver of student achievement and overall school effectiveness (Opper, 2019; Roxas et al., 2019; Amadi, 2015). In the Philippines, enhancing teaching quality depends on access to in-service training (INSET) and continuing professional development (CPD), collectively called teacher professional development (TPD). These aim to build pedagogical competence, deepen content mastery, and promote lifelong learning via formal and informal learning channels (Abakah, 2023; Srinivasacharlu, 2019; Rivera et al., 2019).

Despite their recognized value, many Filipino teachers face barriers to meaningful, relevant, and accessible TPD opportunities. Professional development (PD) is often perceived as disconnected from classroom realities, overly generic despite formal training needs assessments (TNAs), and administered through top-down structures that offer little school-level autonomy. Teachers in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs) and low-resource private schools are particularly constrained by logistical, financial, and institutional limitations (Rivera et al., 2025).

These gaps persist even with Executive Order No. 266 (1995) and the CPD Act of 2016 (RA 10912), which require licensed professionals to complete CPD units to renew their professional licenses. However, implementation of these mandates has drawn criticism for being overly compliance-focused, costly, and inaccessible for many public school teachers (Medenilla, 2018; Hapal, 2018). Scholars such as Tullao Jr. (2003) and Rivera et al. (2019) argue that CPD must shift from a regulatory framework to a developmental one-anchored on research, innovation, and advanced education-rather than mere seminar attendance.

These policy issues are particularly urgent in light of the Philippines' persistently poor performance in international student assessments such as PISA, particularly in science, mathematics, reading, and critical thinking (Chi, 2023; Magsambol, 2024; Ombay, 2024). As Bai (2023) notes, these educational challenges are systemic and multifaceted, driven by poverty, resource inadequacies, poor infrastructure, and the digital divide. While comprehensive reform is needed, one foundational intervention is strengthening teacher development systems through responsive, inclusive, and effective INSET and TPD programs. This study focuses on addressing gaps in TPD, particularly on how such can be made more equitable and effective. Prior research (Durlak et al., 2011; Murano et al., 2019; Roxas et al., 2019) shows that access to value-adding TPD programs not only enhances teaching quality but also improves student outcomes and contributes to national productivity. We argue that while access is a necessary condition for participation, other sufficiency conditions-such as manageable workload, supportive environments, and relevant content-must also be in place to maximize TPD's impact.

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Grounded in teacher voices across various contexts, we contribute to discourse by offering an empirically informed, equity-driven approach to reforming INSET and TPD in the Philippines. Through key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and policy analysis, we propose actionable strategies to recalibrate current systems toward relevance, accessibility, and measurable impact.

Hence, we pose the central research question: ***How can accessibility and participation in INSET and TPD programs be improved and recalibrated to equip teachers with cutting-edge tools and pedagogies, thereby enhancing teaching quality and revitalizing the Philippine education system?*** To answer this, we also examine the following sub-questions:

1. What are the current practices in allocating INSET and TPD opportunities in schools?
2. What implementation gaps hinder the impact of INSET and TPD on teaching and learning outcomes?
3. How can INSET and TPD programs be more effectively designed and facilitated to improve teaching quality?

Thus, we provide a teacher-driven perspective on what TPD programs are needed, how they should be delivered, and what policies can best support them-responding directly to the systemic barriers identified by Friedman and Phillips (2001), Abakah et al. (2022), and critiques of current CPD implementation (Medenilla, 2018; Hapal, 2018). Hence, we are guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To map current INSET and TPD programs accessed by basic and secondary teachers, and assess their alignment with evolving instructional demands;
2. To conduct a training needs assessment (TNA) to identify what teachers need and how they prefer INSET and TPD to be delivered;
3. To consolidate policy recommendations for the Department of Education (DepEd) and related agencies based on teacher feedback and empirical analysis, toward a recalibrated and impact-driven teacher development system.

1.1. Scope and limitation

We examine the accessibility, relevance, and responsiveness of INSET and TPD programs in the Philippine education system, with a specific focus on identifying the implementation bottlenecks and policy gaps that affect teacher participation and training quality. We cover both the public and private basic education sectors and considers the perspectives of teachers, school administrators, and policy actors to offer a grounded and multi-actor understanding of the current INSET and TPD ecosystem.

We employ a mixed-methods approach. On the qualitative side, it draws on KIIs with DepEd officials, education researchers, and school leaders, alongside FGDs with teachers across three regions representing Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. These were designed to surface ground-level insights on the accessibility, contextual fit, and delivery challenges of training programs. On the quantitative side, we utilize secondary data from DepEd's School Form 7 (SF7) for School Year 2022-2023, which provides nationwide teacher-level data on subject assignments, specialization, and participation in relevant PD activities.

While the integration of qualitative and quantitative data through triangulation enhances the depth and robustness of our findings, certain limitations must be acknowledged. First, the SF7 data we used covers only a single school year, limiting the ability to track longitudinal trends or observe the full training cycle that is typically assessed across a five-year period by

government institutions like the Civil Service Commission (CSC). Moreover, this was the latest complete and validated version available from the School Effectiveness Division (SED) of the Bureau of Human Resource and Organizational Development (BHROD). Second, the SF7 dataset lacks teacher identifiers and detailed metadata on training content, mode of delivery, or duration, which restricts the extent to which participation can be contextualized or aligned with specific teaching assignments. Third, while qualitative findings are rich and geographically diverse, they are not statistically generalizable. They are meant to illuminate systemic patterns, institutional constraints, and overall lived teacher experiences. This limits the diagnostic utility of the dataset in evaluating whether INSET and TPD programs are both relevant and impactful.

SF7 also presented inconsistencies that limit interpretation. Some teachers appeared multiple times because they were assigned to more than one grade level or subject, resulting in repeated entries and potential over- or underestimation of training reach. In some cases, blank or “null” values were inconsistently encoded across divisions, and training participation in general was not uniformly tracked. These complicate efforts to accurately evaluate whether INSET and TPD programs are being implemented equitably or effectively across the system as desired.

1.2. Significance of the study

Being a less developed economy, whose trajectory is anchored on education as one of the pre-conditions for economic growth, we contribute to the Philippines’ pursuit of upgrading its education system by explicating the role of INSET and TPD training programs in generating positive student outcomes on two fronts: (1) knowledge perspective and (2) policy perspective.

- From a knowledge perspective, we contribute to the growing literature emphasizing the critical importance of teacher development in fostering an effective and engaging learning environment for students that drives performance. The apparent underappreciation (Friedman 2023) and a compliance requirement (Rivera et al. 2019) viewpoint for TPD can be addressed if more scientific studies emphasize its value for teachers, students, and economy.
- From a policy component, we contribute to the basis for government to funnel more resources and invest as well into teacher development accompanied by a strategy to implement such effectively. By having stakeholder-driven INSET and TPD program needs assessment, policymakers will be able to design strategies to respond to the actual needs of the teachers rather than allocating resources to INSET and TPD that do not produce maximum leverage in meeting national educational goals. Through this study, we can recommend teacher development strategies for government to consider as it revitalizes the Philippine education sector towards better student outcomes and performance. This is our contribution to enhancing the education sector through teacher development.

2. Literature review

2.1. The role of INSET and TPD programs on student outcomes

TPD and its relationship to student learning outcomes has been at the forefront of education research, since it has been scholarly observed that teacher quality influences student success (Opper 2019; Amadi 2015). The overarching aim of INSET-TPD programs is to enhance teachers’ skill, content knowledge, and pedagogical practices, all of which directly impact student learning outcomes. Dunst et al. (2015) conducted a meta-synthesis of 15 research reviews on INSET-TPD. They employed a multiple case research approach, based on a

framework to review more than 25,000 abstracts and then coded the research syntheses by teacher and student outcomes. Student outcomes were measured through improvements in student knowledge or academic performance, child skill acquisition, and changes in student behavior, while teacher outcomes were observed changes or improvements in the following areas: attitudes or beliefs, content/subject knowledge, and use of instructional or behavioral practices. Methods include both measures, and a few only focused on student outcomes. They discussed analyzing the associated positive teacher or student outcomes with INSET-TPD.

Various studies demonstrating that effective INSET and TPD programs lead to significant improvements in student academic achievement (Blank and De las Alas 2009; Blank et al. 2008; Dunst and Trivette 2012; Joyce and Showers 1995; Saylor and Johnson 2014; Snow-Renner and Lauer 2005; Yoon et al. 2007; Zaslow et al. 2010). Moreover, Yoon et al. (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of TPD programs and found that the teachers who participated in high-quality and content-focused TPD programs contributed to increased student achievement in subjects like mathematics and reading. Specifically, it showed that student scores increased by approximately 21 percent on average, following their teachers' participation in these programs. Different doses of TPD were also associated with positive outcomes (Dunst et al. 2015). As per Zaslow et al. (2010), shorter periods of TPD are effective for specific skills, but more extensive training is needed for broader-based and complex teaching techniques.

There are several challenges in studying the role of TPD in student outcomes. Certain limitations include tracing changes in teaching practice from TPD and measuring them afterwards. For instance, Ingvarson et al. (2005) relied on teacher self-report data to link the changes and evaluate the measures for impact on knowledge, impact on teachers' practice, impact on student learning outcomes, and impact on teacher efficacy. Results indicated that active learning influenced teacher efficacy, increasing teachers' confidence and ability to meet student learning needs. Similarly, Garet et al. (2001) assessed the measures from more programs specifically capturing experienced teachers at a more extensive scope and period of TPD; with the same conclusion, that an effective strategy is to allow teachers to test-out new practices and observe its effects on their students.

2.2. The role of INSET and TPD on national productivity

National productivity can be defined as an economy's ability to effectively utilize its resources to generate various goods and services that would drive economic growth and social development (Shurchuluu 2002; Basu et al. 2022; Vallés-Giménez and Zárate-Marco 2016). A critical component is human capital, which refers to the knowledge, skills, and competencies of the workforce (Marimuthu et al. 2009). Teachers play a pivotal role in developing the human capital of a community by imparting knowledge and skills to students who will eventually become part of the workforce. Most economies have allotted a significant part of their budget to education and research as its long-term benefits directly contribute to the economy.

However, quality education heavily relies on teachers and non-teaching personnel's ability to meet its students' needs, while meeting the changing trends of the workforce at the same time (Johnson 2006). This is why as early as the pre-service teacher period; future teachers are exposed to various pedagogical approaches and curriculum standards that will help them adapt to the diverse learning needs of students. At the same time, expectations are being set on the ground in terms of the outside schoolwork that teachers would have met in compliance with existing educational laws, such as INSET and TPD programs. The premise behind TPDs lies

in the belief that teachers must be capable of competing internationally and continuously improving their skills to ensure that they remain responsive and effective.

Scholarly literature focused extensively on TPDs' role in bridging the skills gap in the labor market, especially in the Global South, where most of the education systems are still struggling to meet the international standards in quality education (Hanada 2021; Sepúlveda et al. 2022; Rakhmani and Sakhyya 2024). As such, the government plays a vital role in aligning both INSET and TPD programs with national development goals. For instance, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Japan have invested in targeted TPD programs within the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) cluster, considering the return of investments it would generate to technological innovation and industrial diversification (Zheng et al. 2022; Liu 2023). In the United States of America (USA), particularly in Wisconsin, multiculturalism and responsive pedagogy were integrated in its TPD in response to its growing racial divide and discrimination (Shade 1995). Also, Spring (2017) believed that these initiatives are responsive to the diaspora of migrants and migrant workers from Latin America, who come to the USA hoping for a better life.

From the side of the education sector, TPDs indirectly reduce the long-term costs associated with teaching, such as high dropout rates and the need for remedial education. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) underscored the role of induction and mentoring programs in improving teacher retention and effectiveness. Motivated teachers are more likely to stay when they are provided with CPD, which not only enriches their instructional strategies in the classroom, but also enhances their adaptability to evolving educational standards and technologies (Rose and Sughrue 2020; Shrestha 2022). This professional growth translates into a more skilled and engaged workforce, directly influencing student outcomes. However, Önalan and Gürsoy (2020) noted that TPDs require careful design and implementation to fully reap its benefits. This, after they found out in a purposive sampling of English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in private schools across Türkiye, that the content of these programs often lacks relevance to teachers' specific needs or the unique challenges of their teaching environments.

In the Philippines, CPDs were introduced after RA No. 10912 became a law mandating the integration of CPD programs across all regulated professions, as determined by law, including teaching, to ensure that professionals continue to develop their knowledge, skills, and competencies. However, despite the significant amounts of money allocated to these training programs, Labayo (2022) argued that program effectiveness remains questionable because while teacher-training programs were generally successful in achieving positive reactions from participants, there was a lack of systematic assessment to measure improvements in teachers' learning and behavior following the training.

Since 2017, DepEd has been using the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) as its benchmark for assessing teaching competencies and guiding PD initiatives (Gepila 2020). It also serves as their basis for determining the appropriate promotion system to correspond with the changing economic conditions. Also, Marasigan (2023) evaluated licensed teachers who graduated from Eastern Samar State University and found that most respondents expressed desire for more TPD to meet the demands of the profession. One reason behind this trend is the additional workload teachers must meet, preventing them from participating in TPDs, let alone retain their focus and attention throughout these programs (Naparan and Castañeda 2021). For Ortiga (2014) and Allen et al. (2019), while they focused on nursing education, the discourse on the lack of quantifiable metrics to measure CPD's long-term impact raises concerns about their contribution to national productivity, regardless of discipline and profession.

2.3. Challenges and barriers to delivering effective INSET and TPD programs

INSET and TPD programs are integral in enhancing the effectiveness of teachers in providing quality education (Samundeeswari et al. 2024). Many international and local organizations offer targeted training for educators to specifically address issues in the education system. However, these programs face many challenges and barriers that impede the delivery of effective PD programs. According to Mahara (2024), even if the teachers feel that INSET and TPD programs are significant for effective teaching and learning, insufficiency of experts, inadequate resources, waning motivation, deficient policies, time management challenges, political influences, and financial constraints constitute major hurdles in executing TPD.

Scholarly studies also argue that funding is one of the major challenges that hinder delivery of effective INSET and TPD programs. According to Quilapio and Callo (2022), insufficient financial and administrative funding is a crucial barrier impacting both the INSET and TPD programs. Schools often struggle to allocate the necessary budget for comprehensive professional initiatives, which can lead to insufficient training opportunities for teachers (Sibomana and Ndayambaje 2024; Ramani et al. 2019). When resources are limited, the quality of training can diminish, leaving teachers without proper skills they need to succeed in their roles (Nazar and Nordin 2020). Likewise, the inefficiencies in resource allocation also contribute to the challenge of delivering effective INSET and TPD programs.

In the Philippines, although the budget for education has been increased and a great portion of this budget is allocated for human resource and training development (HRTD), the utilization of these funds fluctuates considerably (World Bank 2016). One factor could also be the flow of funds from the DepEd central office to regional offices (ROs) down to the schools to conduct INSET. This process causes significant delays that account for the relatively low utilization rate of the HRTD funds (World Bank 2016). The untimely transfer of funds affects the momentum and efficiency of the PD programs and teachers' training availability becomes limited (Sinsay-Villanueva and Orbeta Jr. 2023).

Another crucial challenge is the access and participation of teachers. Accessibility to INSET and TPD programs is hindered by the lack of support from schools, financial constraints, and overall lack of motivation among teachers to attend training sessions (Mahara 2024). This is supported by the study of Jackaria and Caballes (2022), where findings showed that among the 84 teacher-respondents, most of the teachers mentioned financial constraints as the number one barrier in joining TPD programs followed by time constraints. Other barriers identified in the study are lack of motivation, lack of opportunities, lack of support from schools, lack of needed resources such as gadgets and devices, and high workload.

Identifying and training individuals who will implement the training itself for the teachers is another challenge for effective INSET and TPD program (Robinson and Wyss 2020). The quality trainers impact the outcomes of the INSET and TPD programs just as the quality teachers impact the learning outcomes of the students. Tekkumru-Kisa and Stein (2017), mentioned in their study that to ensure TPD programs' effectiveness, well-prepared facilitators are essential components. Identifying resource persons such as facilitators, trainers, and coaches requires careful consideration on the selection criteria, recruitment process, and training of these personnel when designing a training program and planning for scale, including a clear understanding of the knowledge and skills the trainers or coaches must have to effectively train others (Robinson and Wyss 2020).

Another barrier pertains to the lack of adequate evaluation and feedback mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of the INSET and TPD programs. Despite the significant resources spent on such, rigorous evidence on the effectiveness of such programs remains limited (Popova et al. 2016). At the same time, many evaluations fail to provide sufficient details on the actual content or delivery mechanisms of the training to inform the design of successful programs. This may be partially due to a lack of instruments designed to measure TPD (Popova et al. 2016). Even though teachers got training, they are unable to execute the knowledge on student achievement (Mahara 2024). Adequate evaluation of TPD programs is important to prevent such outcomes. Another issue with regards to the lack of evaluation is teachers' behavior towards training. Mathema and Bista (2006) mentioned that teachers at remote rural schools have a tendency to avoid teaching. They look for training opportunities to escape from work. Teacher training has enhanced teacher absenteeism rather than school effectiveness (Mahara 2024). When programs are not evaluated systematically, it becomes difficult to identify areas for improvement or to demonstrate the effectiveness of such initiatives to stakeholders (Lim and Janicke 2013).

2.4. Interventions to alleviate challenges and barriers to delivering effective INSET and TPD programs

Scholarly literature explored interventions to alleviate the challenges previously mentioned to provide better access and stimulate participation in INSET and TPD programs. We begin with Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) who identified seven characteristics of effective TPD: (1) focuses on content-based pedagogy; (2) integrates active learning; (3) enables collaborative learning; (4) includes models to emulate; (5) involves expert and individualized coaching; (6) includes a cycle of feedback and reflection; and (7) provides sufficient time for teachers to adopt new learnings and determine their place in their classrooms. To ensure effectiveness of TPD, recommendations have been made from studies that have investigated challenges and barriers to delivering teacher training and TPD practices from top-performing school systems.

First of these recommendations include the anchoring of the design and evaluation of TPD programs and activities on the standards for TPD as well as the needs of the teachers themselves (Darling-Hammond et al. 2017). Identifying what teachers need can begin by having teachers assess their needs based on what is expected of them according to the standards of their profession (Hiatt and Fairbairn 2018) with the aim of developing expertise (Jensen et al. 2016). Teachers also become more engaged when their TPD is of their own choice (Badri et al. 2016) such as when specific content is addressed which is relevant to their current needs in the classroom. For instance, they may be lacking in knowledge to teach English learners (Hiatt and Fairbairn 2018) or to address the diversity in their classrooms (Badri et al. 2016).

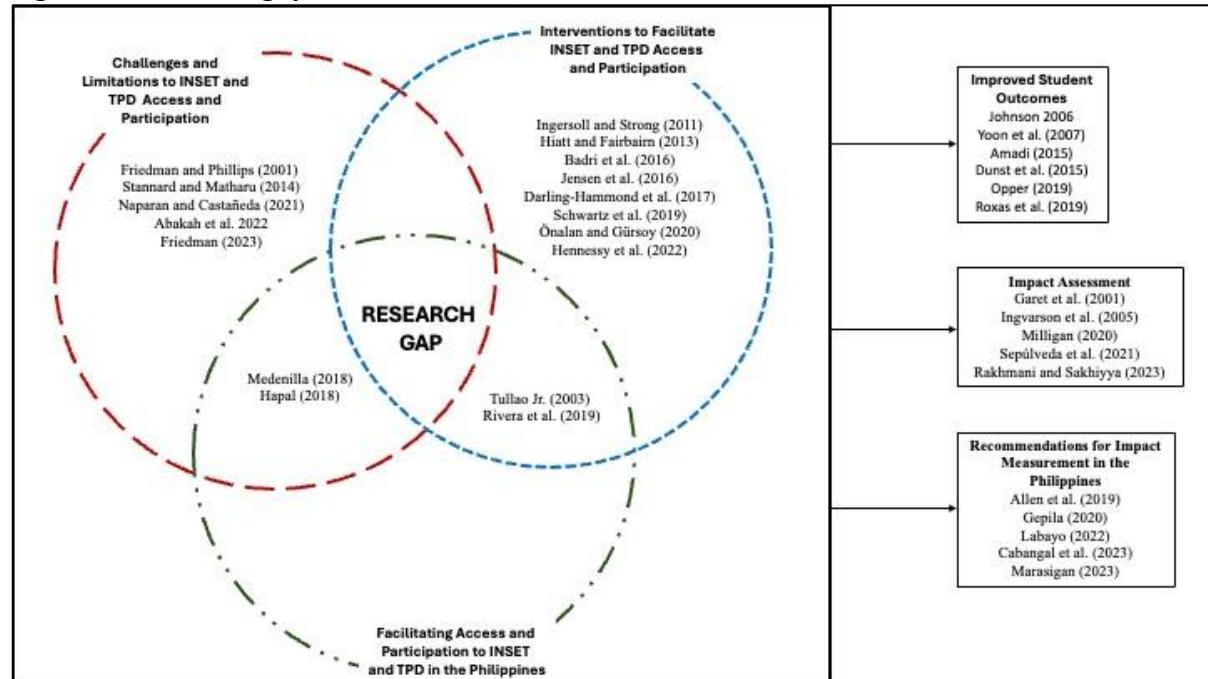
Other recommendations revolve around integrating TPD into the school system. This entails including professional learning activities as part of action plans to improve the school, accommodating them into teachers' schedules, having school leaders and teachers responsible for each other's learning and development, and establishing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation for accountability and rewards (Darling-Hammond et al. 2017; Jensen et al. 2016). One way to plan for successful TPD engagement is to include teachers in the entire process of TPD from planning to evaluation (Badri et al., 2016). In addition, it is advantageous for TPD leaders to be developed with clear and distinct roles, and for funding and continuing education units to be provided (Darling-Hammond et al. 2017; Jensen et al. 2016) to better institutionalize TPD as well as provide incentives for participation.

Specific to the delivery of TPD, a recommended intervention is the provision of technology-based opportunities for professional learning (Darling-Hammond et al. 2017). These entail virtual coaching for teachers which has resulted in personalized mentoring, technology support for TPD coaches, mentors, and facilitators which has increased efficiency, social media use to share practices and resources and conduct forms of TPD programs, video-watching to engage in self- and peer-reflection, software applications to improve content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, and virtual learning platforms enrollment to facilitate self-study (Hennessy et al. 2022). Teachers have also been found to be most engaged in peer-to-peer or collaborative learning for informal exchanges of knowledge; and while this can be implemented for face-to-face activities, it has also been made possible by technology (Badri et al. 2016). Other favored types of TPD entail the utilization of active or experiential learning. This may be in the form of teachers experiencing the strategies themselves first as learners before they bring these strategies into the classroom (Girvan et al. 2016) or teachers conducting action research (Desta et al. 2013). Nonetheless, professional learning in school systems of high-performing economies integrate principles of adult learning (Jensen et al. 2016).

Meanwhile, Schwartz et al. (2019) and Badri et al. (2016) emphasized considering the context in which teachers work and live when designing TPD, which includes factors such as their socioeconomic status, mental and emotional health, the professional and moral support they receive, and their workload. Some conditions were associated with their responsiveness, including compliance with the TPD activity or the quality of its conduct.

2.5. Research gap

Figure 1. Research gap



Source: Constructed by the authors.

We have seen from the review of scholarly literature that the discussion on the challenges and limitations to INSET and TPD access and participation has been widely discussed. Likewise, the identification of these challenges and limitations prompted scholars to propose interventions to facilitate INSET and TPD access and participation. While there are also studies linking the effects of INSET and TPD to student outcomes, impact assessment, and

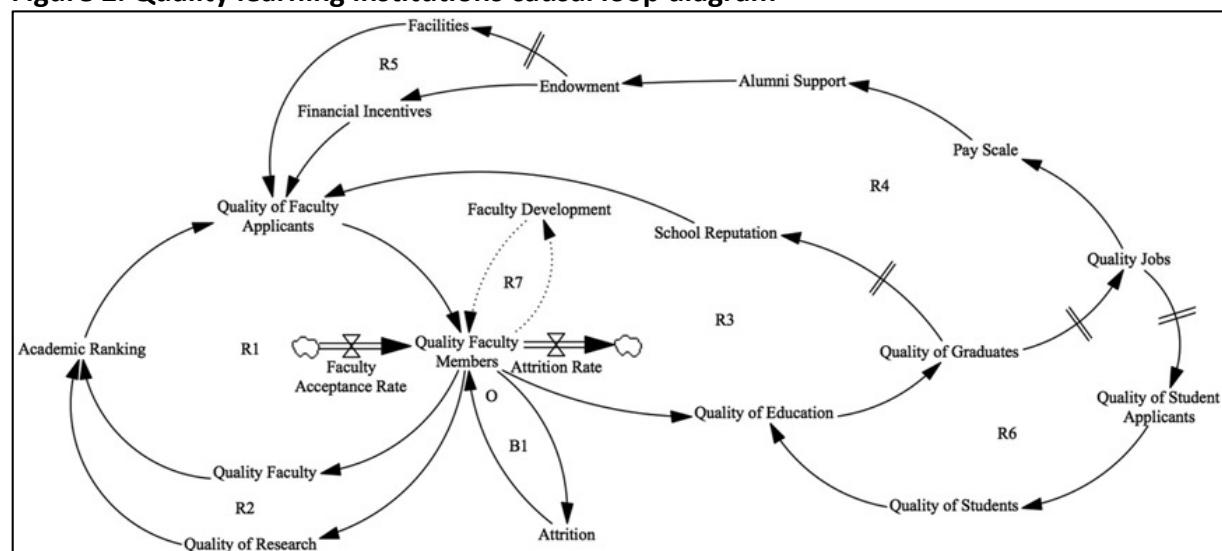
recommendations for impact measurement, these have to be centered on a localized context. From Figure 1, we can see that in the context of the Philippines, there has been a limited number of studies focusing on both grounds. Studies have identified challenges and matched it with corresponding recommendations. None have conducted a teacher-driven identification of challenges and recommendations for intervention in the context of the peculiarities of the Philippine education system. To avoid false-paradigm in designing INSET, TPD, and recommendations for access and participation, input to policy must be teacher-driven.

3. Framework and methodology

3.1. Conceptual framework

Our study is motivated by the foundation of quality learning institutions causal loop diagram developed by Roxas et al. (2019, p. 621) emphasizing that quality teachers drive the quality of education that explains the quality of students and graduates. The cycle continues and quality teachers eventually will reinforce more quality students, quality teachers, quality research, and better rankings; outcomes of INSET and TPD as reproduced and illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Quality learning institutions causal loop diagram



Source: Roxas et al. (2019, p. 621), with permission from authors.

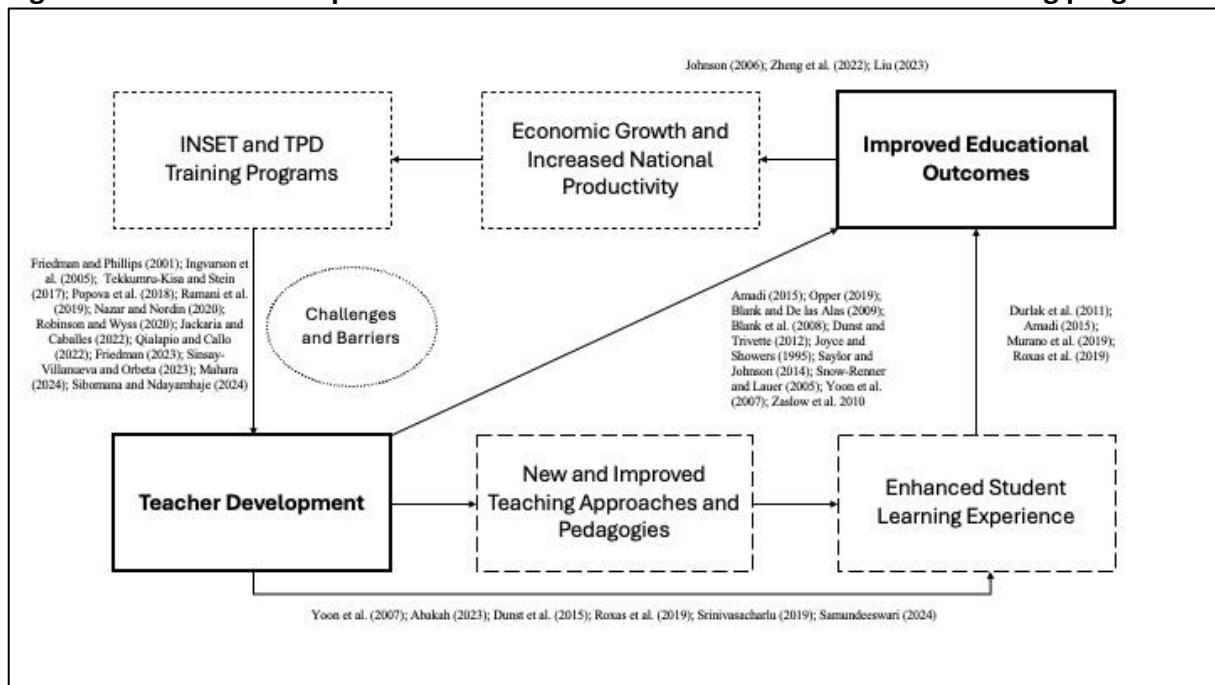
Following Roxas et al. (2019), our framework is illustrated in Figure 3 where teacher development is key to improved educational outcomes requiring attention from policymakers.

3.2. Research design and methodology

Our study was guided by the global education agenda articulated in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which seeks to ensure inclusive, quality education and lifelong learning for all. Specifically, SDG Target 4c calls for a substantial increase in the supply of qualified teachers through improved training, especially in developing contexts (UN, 2015). In alignment with this, international initiatives such as the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) have underscored the importance of PD in enhancing teaching quality. TALIS data indicates that 82% of teachers across OECD countries report that PD activities positively impacted their work (OECD, 2020).

Anchored in this global and national context, we adopted a mixed methods approach to examine the state of INSET and TPD in the Philippines. The focus was to generate a teacher-driven understanding of what training programs are needed and how they can be effectively designed and delivered to improve access, participation, and relevance. Following Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017), qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies were combined to ensure both depth and breadth in addressing the research questions.

Figure 3. Teacher development framework anchored on INSET and TPD training programs



3.2.1. Qualitative data collection

The core of our analysis was grounded in qualitative inquiry to capture the lived experiences of teachers and school leaders.. FGDs were conducted with basic education teachers who met specific criteria: they were licensed professional teachers (LPTs), actively teaching in public schools, and had participated in at least one INSET or TPD program. . Guided by themes drawn from Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Herzberg et al., 1959; Griffin et al., 2016; Nickerson, 2023), the FGDs explored teacher motivation, institutional challenges, and training preferences. (See Appendix 1 for the FGD instrument.)

In parallel, KIIs were conducted with policymakers and education sector experts involved in teacher development. These individuals were selected for their expertise and familiarity with INSET and TPD design and implementation. Ten were invited, with a minimum target of five interviews achieved. The KII instrument mirrored the FGD structure and thematic alignment. (See Appendix 2.)

All qualitative data were transcribed, anonymized, and analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns, issues, and insights. Herzberg's theory served not only as a conceptual lens to interpret the findings but also guided the formulation of policy recommendations responsive to both institutional constraints and teacher-driven motivations.

3.2.2. Document review

To contextualize the field data and design the qualitative instruments, we conducted a document and literature review. This included analysis of DepEd and NEAP policy issuances, congressional proceedings, and Commission on Audit (COA) reports relating to teacher training. The review also encompassed both local and international academic literature on INSET and TPD.

Particular attention was given to DepEd Region X (Northern Mindanao) due to the availability of a comprehensive archive of regional memoranda (RMs) on INSET and TPD, and the significant number of study participants based in the area. This enabled robust triangulation between policy documents and lived experiences captured through FGDs and KIIs. The document review traced policy trends, highlighted implementation bottlenecks, and surfaced institutional priorities across regional contexts.

3.2.3. Quantitative validation and triangulation

To support and validate the qualitative findings, the study analyzed secondary data from DepEd's SF7, which functions as the national inventory of school personnel profiles. SF7 contains key metadata such as teacher name, position title, subject specialization, grade level taught, teaching load in hours, and participation in relevant INSET or TPD. Schools manually complete SF7 annually, and the data are then transmitted through the Basic Education Information System (BEIS), or consolidated through division offices. The data include only limited indicators on training, which is answerable by a "Yes" or "No" response regarding whether the teacher received relevant INSET or TPD aligned with their assigned teaching load.

In this study, SF7 data for SY 2022-2023 were analyzed to examine whether teachers assigned to teach outside their declared subject specialization had attended the appropriate training programs, based on criteria set by the SED-BHROD. A table was constructed comparing participation rates among teachers by subject area and region, based on recorded responses. Null entries or unprocessed submissions were also included to assess data completeness and quality. Access to the dataset was granted under strict confidentiality protocols by the SED.

The study followed a convergent parallel design (Johnson et al., 2017), wherein qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed independently and then cross-verified to strengthen the validity of the findings. Triangulation enabled a comprehensive understanding of the barriers, gaps, and opportunities within the INSET and TPD ecosystem. For instance, regional disparities in SF7 training data aligned with qualitative reports of limited access and logistical constraints.

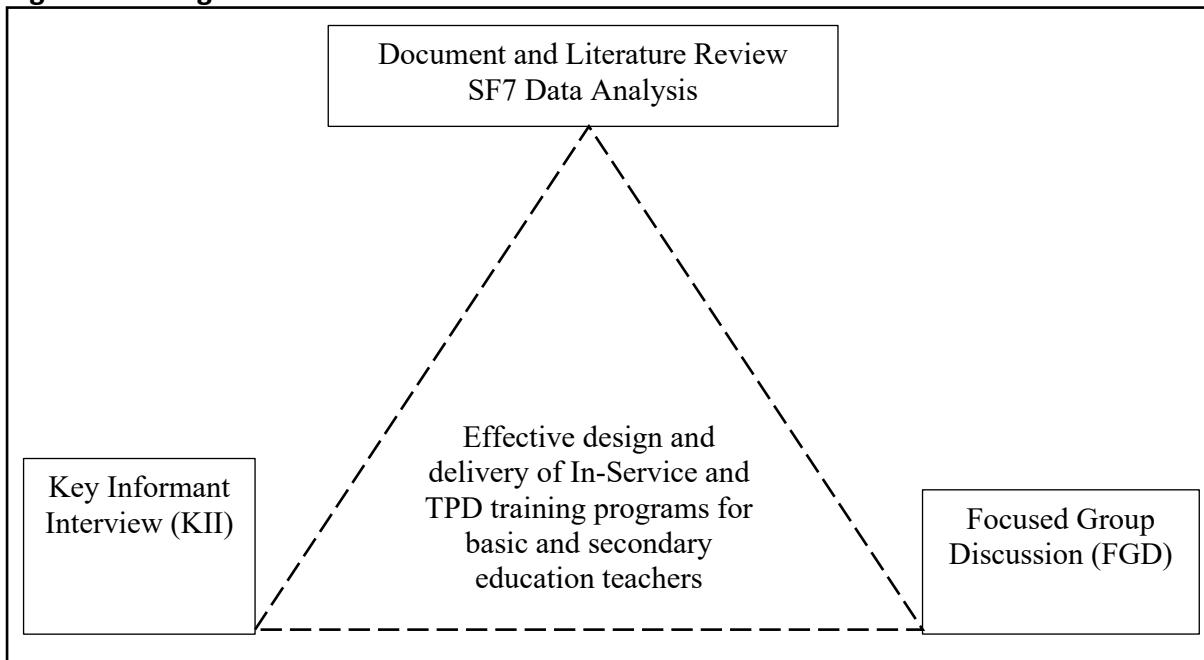
3.2.4. Synthesis and policy linkages

Through this integrated approach, we were able to organize, summarize, and validate qualitative insights using quantitative evidence and institutional documentation. The methodology allowed us to surface patterns of exclusion, inefficiencies in delivery, and the disconnect between training content and teacher needs.

The validation process supported the formulation of evidence-based conclusions that directly respond to our research questions: how can the Philippine government facilitate more equitable access to INSET and TPD; and how can teacher development strategies be recalibrated to equip educators with the tools and pedagogies necessary in a rapidly evolving education landscape?

Our findings also inform ongoing policy debates on rethinking CPD implementation to prioritize development over regulatory compliance.

Figure 4. Triangulation method



Source: Constructed by the authors.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Facts about INSET and TPD training in the Philippines

As one of DepEd's programs, the NEAP is responsible for the development of programs and guidelines on conducting INSET and TPD programs in the Philippines. It follows PD framework in providing INSET and TPD programs to all teachers. Table 1 summarized their framework including the target competencies and participants.

Table 1. Summary of NEAP PD framework for INSET and TPD programs

Program	Description	Participants	Duration
Induction programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare new hired teachers to efficiently perform all functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly hired teachers and school leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years for new teachers • 1 year for school leaders
Career progression programs (regular programs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance teachers' and school leaders' competencies for higher stages of their career • Support teachers and school leaders promotion • Assessment of professional learning needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All DepEd personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not specified
Career progression programs (subject content programs supporting quality teaching)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover one or more PPST indicators • Subject specific or combination of subject and non-subject specific for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers who teach the subject that the program covers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not specified

content development and pedagogy			
Career progression programs(master classes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover topic inherent to participant's professional standards but beyond expertise • Should be taken after first 9 subjects or 18 units of regular and subject content programs • Learning Action Cell (LAC) and INSET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not more than 10 participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum of 5 days
Special programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplementary trainings that support teachers and school leaders in the delivery of emerging and non-teaching-related tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All DepEd personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not specified

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

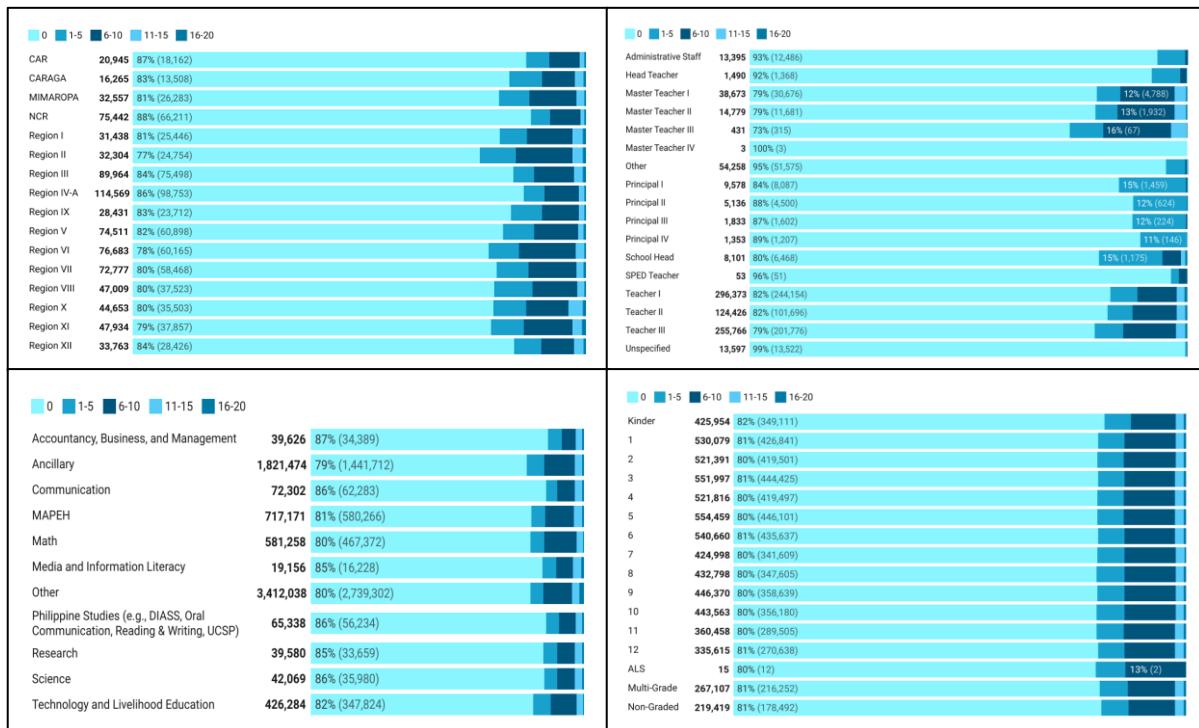
The PD framework maps the proficiency of teachers. Induction programs are prerequisite of all other programs while special programs can be taken during the induction and career progression programs. INSET, as part of the master classes, provides programs that vary each school year (SY) depending on the areas of need as identified by the teachers and school heads. It is also an assurance that teachers are still engaged in PD (Anchio and Arrieta, 2021). Moreover, INSET programs are organized either at the school division/district level. On the other hand, LAC is utilized to provide urgent training to teachers, especially when urgent issues arise within their schools. It is also an avenue for sharing, reflection, and gaining new insights in teaching between teachers (Ancho and Arrieta, 2021). Table 3 compares two INSET programs provided in SY 2023-2024 and SY 2024-2025.

While the framework for INSET and TPD programs has been put in place, access to these programs and training is still limited among teachers. Since not all teachers are able to attend TPD programs, school heads are only choosing the number of teachers to attend, which will cascade their learning to other teachers. However, the cascade method, being the supply- and centrally- driven, does not consider the level of competence of the participating teachers and can result in watered-down quality of content and treatment of materials (Siena 2019). The Cascade method is prone to distortion of messages transferred during the training due to miscommunication and own interpretation of the same message among the participants (Susuki 2011). Additionally, teachers who attended training for days although have been familiarized with the content and design of the training program may still not have enough time to fully equip them as credible trainers (Siena 2019). While there are still no studies indicating the optimal proportion of teachers to be trained when all teachers cannot participate in trainings, the effectiveness of new pedagogies and interventions still relies on the number of teachers adopting them (Darling-Hammond 2017).

Figure 5 below presents a disaggregated visualization of the teacher training participation during SY 2023-2024 using the SF7 data. The figure is divided into four panels, each representing variations in training attendance by region, employment position, subject specialization, and grade level assignment. The horizontal bars show the distribution of teachers by number of training days attended, which is categorized into five bands namely: 0 days, 1-5 days, 6-10 days, 11-15 days, and 16-20 days. The lightest color represents the teachers who did not attend any training during the reporting period. For each unit, the total headcount

and training participation rates are labeled on the left of the bars. The corresponding percentage reflects the proportion of teachers who received at least one day of PD during the reference year. Out of a total of 839,245 public school teachers who filled out the form, only 148,078 were recorded having participated in relevant training activities. This means that only 17.6% of the teaching workforce was able to access PD opportunities.

Figure 5. Above (L-R): Overview of Training Attendance by Region^{7,8}, Position; Below* (L-R): Specialization, and Grade Level for SY 2023-2024.



* Some teacher IDs appear multiple times because teachers handle multiple subjects and grade levels, which may affect the tracking of training participation per entry.

Source: Authors' construction based on SF7 data gathered from the SED-BHROD.

The training participation rate observed during this period should be interpreted with extreme caution. For one, it does not imply that all other teachers lack PD over a 5-year cycle, which is the reference point commonly used by the CSC. Instead, only a small subset of teachers was recorded as having attended relevant INSET or TPD activities during SY 2022-2023. Without the presence of additional years of data, it is not possible for the study to determine whether the same individuals are being repeatedly trained or if training is being equitably rotated across teaching staff. Moreover, SF7 lacks teacher ID-level continuity, which limits the ability to track repeated participation or identify whether newly reassigned or out-of-field teachers are being prioritized. Finally, many of the responses in the training participation field were either blank, “null,” or marked as “N/A.” These were treated as “No” responses in the analysis, indicating that many School Division Offices (SDOs) may still be in the early stages of standardizing and completing their data collation processes for SF7.

⁷ Data used does not reflect the recent updates related to the passage of Republic Act No. 12000, signed by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. in 2024, which re-establishes the Negros Island Region (NIR). NIR is composed of the provinces of Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental, and Siquijor. These provinces were previously part of separate administrative regions namely Western Visayas (Region VI) and Central Visayas (Region VII). As the law was enacted after the reference period of the data, changes in the regional boundaries and administrative classifications under this new setup are not yet covered in this dataset.

⁸ The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) is excluded from SF7 because its schools fall under the Bangsamoro Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education (MBHTE) rather than the DepEd ROs.

In terms of geography, Figure 5 (above, left) presents the regional differences in training participation. Despite being among the most resource-endowed region in the country, the National Capital Region (NCR⁹) recorded an 88% non-participation rate, meaning only 12% of teachers in the region accessed any form of PD. Similarly, CALABARZON (Region IV-A) and Central Luzon (Region III) reported non-participation rates of 86% and 84%, respectively. These figures challenge the assumption that urban regions have uniformly better PD delivery. Instead, it points to deep-seated implementation or reporting gaps even in well-connected areas.

In more remote or underserved areas, the situation is equally concerning. Cagayan Valley (Region II) and Western Visayas (Region VI) reported non-participation rates of 77% and 78%, respectively. These regional disparities highlight potential challenges such as limited infrastructure, lack of trainers, or logistical barriers in delivering training in more remote areas. These regional disparities highlight the need to revisit the equity dimension of PD access, particularly in relation to the department's broader goals under the Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP) 2030¹⁰. Moreover, the high proportion of "0 trainings" in the dataset also highlights persistent data quality issues across SDOs, many of which are still in the early stages of standardizing SF7 reporting processes, as mentioned repeatedly.

Figure 5 (above, right) shows the breakdown of training position by position. Most of the teachers recorded in the SF7 used for the study fall under the ranks of Teacher I, II, and III¹¹, and while they make up the bulk of the teaching workforce in the Philippines, it is surprising that most of them still did not receive any training. Higher-ranking instructional roles, such as Master Teacher I to III, reported similar or even lower engagement, with non-participation ranging from 73% to 79%. Particularly notable is Master Teacher III, where only 16% (67 individuals) were recorded to have received training. Although these figures may appear slightly better than those for lower-ranked teachers, they remain below expected benchmarks for a cadre entrusted with mentoring and instructional leadership responsibilities.

When disaggregated in terms of subject specialization, Figure 5 (below, left) disaggregates teacher participation in PD based on their subject specialization, revealing widespread non-participation across disciplines. Across all subjects, non-participation rates remain alarmingly high. Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) teachers reported the highest rate of non-participation at 87%, followed closely by Communication (86%), Philippine Studies (86%), and Science (86%). This is a concerning trend, especially since these subjects are tied to the Senior High School curriculum and were previously assumed to benefit from recent curricular reforms and upskilling priorities under NEAP. While Technology and Livelihood

⁹ Serves as the center of government, business, and education in the Philippines. It consists of 16 cities and 1 municipality.

¹⁰ Formally launched in 2022 as part of DepEd's comprehensive long-term roadmap for enhancing the basic education system in the Philippines. The plan covers both formal education from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and non-formal education through the Alternative Learning System (ALS). The BEDP 2030 aims to make sure that all Filipino learners realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to nation-building through quality education. It also serves as a strategic framework to address the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on learning and education delivery by building a more resilient and inclusive education system across the country. Further details regarding the BEDP 2030 can be found in the official documentation: <https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/BEDP-2030-Photo-Documentation.pdf>.

¹¹ Public school teachers in the Philippines follow a structured career progression from Teacher I to Master Teacher IV. This system was first adopted in 1979 when the now-defunct Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) issued Order No. 10, providing the basic framework for a merit-based promotion system that aimed to professionalize the teaching workforce and encourage continuous professional development. Subsequent changes were made to the system in 2007, 2015, 2016, and 2017, with the latest being in 2022 when DepEd adopted the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) for the Expanded Career Progression System for Public School Teachers. Under this system, Teacher I serves as the entry-level position for licensed teachers, typically after passing the LET and fulfilling basic educational requirements (see Sinsay-Villanueva et al, 2025 for more details about the selection process), while Teacher II and III are promotional steps given to qualified public school teachers that have demonstrated competence and professional development in the workplace. Beyond these ranks, the Master Teacher levels (I to IV) are awarded to educators who demonstrate excellence in teaching, leadership in instructional innovations, mentoring of fellow teachers, and contributions to school improvement. Advancing to these higher ranks not only requires years of teaching experience and very satisfactory performance ratings but also active participation in research, curriculum development, and training.

Education (TLE) and MAPEH (Music, Arts, PE, and Health) were slightly better at 82% and 81% non-participation, these figures still imply that nearly 4 in every 5 teachers in these fields had no formal training in SY 2023–2024. This is troubling given the labor market alignment goals embedded in the K-12 curriculum, where TLE is expected to support employability and entrepreneurship tracks.

Collectively, these results point to a gap in subject-aligned PD delivery. Despite a range of national programs launched in recent years, including the National Learning Camp, HOTS-PLP, and foundational literacy programs, the reach and consistency of training remain insufficient. Moreover, the persistent underrepresentation of teachers in specialized fields (e.g., Philippine Studies, ABM, Research) highlights the need for more adaptive, demand-driven, and competency-based PD offerings. For NEAP to fulfill its mandate of continuous teacher quality improvement, it must urgently adopt a more granular approach to PD planning; one that is attuned to both subject matter needs and local delivery capacities.

Figure 5 (below, right) disaggregates teacher participation in PD opportunities by grade level assignment and shows that approximately 80% to 82% of teachers across all grade levels reported zero training days in SY 2023-2024. Contrary to policy assumptions that prioritize early-grade and foundational learning interventions, the data show that training non-participation is consistently high across Kinder to Grade 12. For instance, Kinder teachers recorded an 82% non-participation rate, followed by Grade 1 (81%), Grade 2 (80%), and so on, with no meaningful variation in participation rates across the grade spectrum. In the upper grades, Grade 11 and Grade 12 teachers also reported 80% and 81% non-participation, respectively. This is particularly concerning given that Senior High School (SHS) is expected to deliver specialized tracks that require updated training in content mastery, technical-vocational skills, and industry alignment. Multi-Grade (81%) and Non-Graded (81%) teachers, who are often working in geographically isolated or resource-poor contexts, showed no better participation rates despite being potential targets for equity-enhancing measures under NEAP.

INSET programs among private schools differ as INSET programs from NEAP are only limited to DepEd schools. With this, private schools resort to conducting school-based INSET with topics based on the identified areas of need of teachers and school heads only. But aside from school-based INSET, private school teachers are also invited to participate in some of the INSET programs provided by the Private Education Assistance Committee (PEAC), a contracting committee working with DepEd, that aids private schools in the Philippines particularly in educational programs. PEAC was able to conduct INSET programs to 14,927 junior high school (JHS) and 11,507 senior high school (SHS). Additionally, the government also provides funding for teacher training for private school teachers through the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GASTPE). This program aids teachers in participating in in-service training, advanced studies scholarships, and financial support for institutional enhancement. The program is offered provided that the teachers undergo the Educational Contracting Scheme (ESC) Program of the GASTPE at the basic education level (DO 116, s. 2009).

Aside from INSET, teachers are also sent to local and international trainings and seminar as part of their TPD (Ancho and Arrieta 2021). TPD programs revolve around teachers' mindset and disposition, learner-centered philosophy, career pathways, accountability, resilience in teaching profession, school-based PD strategies, well-being of teachers, and more (Siena 2019). During and after the pandemic, the mode of delivery of TPD programs shifted drastically as they were offered online, reaching more participants (Ancho and Arrieta 2021).

Also, Chin et al. (2022) found that Filipino teachers (both from public and private) who participated in TPD programs were five to ten times more in 2022 than in 2021 attributed to an increase in the number of online teachers due to pandemic. Chin et al. (2022) also presented challenges and barriers of teachers in participating TPD programs such as conflict with work schedule, cost of trainings and seminars, lack of financial support from the school, and lack of motivation and logistical support.

Table 2 lists the programs and target participants.

Table 2. INSET programs for SY 2023-2024 and SY 2024-2025

SY	Topics	Target participants
2023-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Order Thinking Skills – Professional Learning Packages (HOTS-PLP) for English, Mathematics, and Science; Instructional Leadership Training (ILT): Strengthening Learning Conditions for Early Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training for Teachers Teaching Non-Major Subjects (e.g., Filipino, MAPEH); Microsoft 365 Productivity Online Training through DepEd Philippines; National Learning Camp; National Reading Program; National Mathematics Program; Catch-up Fridays; g. Early Language Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN); Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (DepEd Order No. 31, s. 2018); Child Rights Policy: Adopting the Rights-Based Education Framework in Philippine Basic Education (DepEd Order No. 31, s. 2022); DepEd Child Protection Policy (DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012); Safe Spaces Act (RA No. 11313). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDO officials and personnel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School teachers, administrators, and personnel
2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher's subject area content and pedagogy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kindergarten to Grade 12 teachers

Note: Through DepEd memos DM-OUHROD-2024-0037 and DM-OUHROD-2024-2306.

Source: Constructed by the authors.

4.2. Validation of qualitative themes through document and literature analysis

As part of the preparatory phase, an extensive review of DepEd RMs, national education policies, and scholarly studies on TPD in the Philippines was conducted. This step allowed us to understand how TPD programs are currently being implemented and what common challenges have already been documented in existing literature. In doing so, certain trends have stood out. We noticed that many of the training programs still focus heavily on compliance-related topics, such as school-based management (SBM) or curriculum rollouts. While these are important, they do not always respond directly to the everyday classroom needs of teachers. Another key issue that came up was the digital divide, especially the struggles many teachers face in accessing online training due to lack of devices or stable internet connection (Espinosa, Agbisit, and Cayaban 2020; Chin et al. 2022). These early insights pointed to gaps in the system that needed closer investigation. The literature also highlighted the importance of

making INSET and TPD more relevant to teachers' actual experiences. Authors like Darling-Hammond and Hyler (2020) and Ganal et al. (2019) have emphasized that PD opportunities should be more practical, teacher-led, and grounded in real classroom contexts. These works have helped shape the way we designed our FGDs and KIIs, making sure that our questions were based on known challenges on the ground while remaining open to new and specific insights from the field.

4.3. FGD findings

Three FGDs were conducted. The first was participated by 13 teachers from a public school in Luzon, the second had 10 teachers from a private school in Visayas, and the last FGD had 9 teacher respondents from a private school in Mindanao. Note that participating schools have been anonymized in our analysis.

From the outcome of these FGDs, we highlighted common thrusts, unique insights, salient themes and policy-relevant insights, and a potential INSET and TPD design that can inform more effective and responsive INSET and TPD systems in both public and private schools.

4.3.1. Common thrusts across Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao respondents

Teachers provided valuable insights into the current state of TPD, revealing several shared concerns and aspirations. These common thrusts highlight areas for improvement and opportunities to design more responsive and impactful training programs.

First, there is a need for more targeted and contextualized training. Teachers in all schools consistently noted that current INSET and TPD activities tend to be generic and disconnected from their actual classroom realities. Despite the presence of Training Needs Assessments (TNAs), many felt that the training content seldom reflects the specific needs they have identified. For instance, some teachers reported that while they requested sessions on differentiated instruction or inclusive education, the training they received focused on broad topics like school leadership or policy updates, which were not directly applicable to their daily teaching challenges. This disconnect has led to frustration and disengagement, with some teachers feeling that their time is not well-utilized during training sessions. Moreover, there is a perception that TNAs are merely procedural that are done for compliance rather than as a meaningful input into training design. Hence, teachers are calling for a more consultative and responsive approach, where TNAs translate into customized training modules that are localized, relevant, and practical.

Second, teachers find classroom and behavior management as priority training areas. A key concern for teachers is the growing diversity and complexity of student behaviors, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic. Teachers noted a significant increase in behavioral issues, citing examples such as heightened anxiety, attention difficulties, and lack of social skills among students. In response, there is a strong demand for specialized training in (1) behavior management strategies tailored to multi-grade classrooms; (2) techniques for supporting students with mental health issues or special educational needs (SEN); and (3) practical methods for promoting positive discipline and classroom engagement. Teachers emphasized that traditional approaches are no longer sufficient, and they need updated frameworks and tools that align with the current psychological and developmental profiles of their students. They also noted the importance of peer sharing and case study discussions, where they can learn from each other's experiences in managing challenging classroom dynamics.

Third, teachers also underscored their need for mental health and stress management programs. Another significant theme is the mental health and well-being of teachers themselves wherein educators from both schools described feeling overwhelmed by increasing workloads, which now often include not only teaching responsibilities but also administrative tasks, technological adaptation, and extended work hours due to online and blended learning. According to them, key stressors include (1) lack of work-life balance, with many teachers taking work home; (2) pressure to quickly adapt to new technologies without adequate training or support; and (3) emotional strain from managing students' mental health needs while neglecting their own. As such, they voiced a critical need for mental health support mechanisms, including (1) access to counseling services or mental health professionals; (2) workshops on stress management techniques such as mindfulness, time management, and self-care practices; and (3) support groups or peer networks for emotional support and resilience building. There was consensus that investing in teacher well-being is not just beneficial for educators themselves but also essential for sustaining effective teaching and learning environments.

Fourth, there is a need to address challenges with online training delivery. The shift to virtual INSET and TPD sessions during the pandemic exposed significant barriers to effective online learning for teachers. Common challenges cited include: (1) inadequate equipment such as lack of personal laptops or tablets; (2) unreliable internet connections, particularly in more remote areas; and (3) low levels of engagement during online sessions, with some teachers feeling disconnected or unable to participate actively. While online training offered flexibility and convenience, many teachers expressed that virtual modes failed to foster meaningful learning. They mentioned that online training was helpful during the pandemic. Some also mentioned that conducting training online was good because it caters to more teachers at once, unlike some in-person training with limited slots. Switching to online training delivery led to increased attendance and sustained learning amidst the pandemic. However, they missed the interactive and collaborative aspects of in-person sessions, which they believe are essential for skill development and knowledge retention. Consequently, there is a strong preference for face-to-face training, which allows for (1) immediate feedback and clarification of concepts; (2) collaborative learning through group activities and discussions; and (3) a more immersive and distraction-free environment conducive to learning.

Fifth, teachers desire experiential and practical learning. Teachers voiced out that they value hands-on, practical training experiences far more than passive, lecture-based sessions. They want to apply what they learn in real or simulated classroom contexts to enhance retention and effectiveness. Preferred training formats include (1) simulations or mock lessons, where teachers can practice new techniques and receive feedback; (2) workshops with real classroom scenarios, allowing for problem-solving and group reflection; (3) demonstration teaching by expert educators or facilitators; and (4) collaborative lesson planning and peer coaching. Teachers also emphasized the importance of engaging and credible facilitators, who understand their challenges and can provide concrete, actionable insights. Ultimately, they want training that leads to immediate improvements in teaching practice, not just theoretical understanding.

These presented a call for reform in how INSET and TPD is designed and delivered. There is a pressing need for training that is teacher-centered, context-specific, and focused on real-world applications. By aligning training efforts with these shared concerns, education leaders can empower teachers to thrive in increasingly complex and demanding classroom environments.

4.3.2. Unique insights

While common thrusts exist, it is also critical to underscore unique insights from our sample that distinguish their contexts and needs, based on our discussions, consultations, and feedback. These complement the common themes while revealing their specific institutional challenges, strengths, and TPD preferences.

Luzon. Unique insights include their need for foundational training in pedagogy and assessment. They emphasized the need for basic yet comprehensive training on lesson planning, differentiated instruction, and authentic assessment. Many teachers, particularly new or young teachers, feel underprepared in areas such as (1) designing performance-based tasks and rubrics; (2) aligning formative and summative assessments with learning competencies; and (3) implementing scaffolding strategies for struggling learners. As such, this is indicative of a pressing demand for foundational capacity building, compared to more advanced TPD needs seen in university contexts. Teachers often juggle multiple roles (i.e., as subject teachers, club moderators, discipline officers, administrative support). This role overload contributes to burnout and limits time for INSET and TPD engagements. They prefer bite-sized or modular training formats that can be delivered in phases or asynchronously (notwithstanding the disadvantages of such), so they can fit sessions into their tight schedules. As they are keen on classroom technology tools for basic engagement, they seek training on accessible, easy-to-use tools to increase student engagement in class. These include (1) interactive presentation tools such as *Kahoot*, *Quizizz*, *Padlet*, among others; (2) basic multimedia content creation such as *Canva* and video editing software; and (3) classroom management apps such as *ClassDojo*. While this is the case, teachers also highlighted the need for technical support during rollout, as some of them face technology anxiety and lack confidence in using digital tools effectively. Teachers also noted that parents are highly involved, sometimes intervening in academic or discipline matters, which influences teacher autonomy and classroom management. As such, INSET and TPD programs are also needed particularly on (1) effective parent-teacher communication; (2) handling parental expectations while maintaining professional boundaries; (3) and navigating academic integrity issues (e.g., pressure to adjust grades).

Visayas. Meanwhile, unique insights from the Visayas private school include emphasis on values integration in a Catholic school context. As a Catholic educational institution, the school emphasizes faith-based education, and teachers are expected to integrate values and spirituality across subject areas. Hence, teachers seek training on (1) values integration strategies that are subtle yet effective, especially in non-religious subjects; (2) facilitating moral and ethical discussions among students in a sensitive and inclusive manner; and (3) enhancing student formation programs and retreat facilitation skills. In their basic education department, some teachers are in a situation where they handle multiple grade levels or subjects, especially in specialized or elective areas. This creates challenges in time management and planning differentiated materials, aligning diverse curricular requirements across levels, and managing varying student maturity levels in the same teaching load. INSET and TPD are needed to support efficiency strategies, multi-grade pedagogy, and curriculum integration techniques. Teachers also expressed concern over the rising number of students with special needs and the lack of training and resources to support them effectively. Thus, teachers seek (1) strategies for inclusive education in mainstream classrooms; (2) guidance on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and collaboration with specialists; and (3) tools for early identification and referral of students needing support. Currently, they are also working on strengthening its research profile, even among basic education faculty. Teachers are encouraged to engage in action research, but many feel ill-equipped to undertake research tasks. Hence, there is a call for INSET and TPD

on research methods particularly (1) action research in education (e.g., design, data collection, analysis); (2) writing for publication in peer-reviewed journals; and (3) linking research to classroom innovation. This requirement is also emerging in other schools.

Mindanao. Unique insights from Mindanao highlight a strong culture of innovation and autonomy. Teachers underscored a culture that encourages experimentation and innovation in teaching methodologies. They want greater autonomy in designing and implementing their instructional approaches, which has fostered an environment of continuous learning and self-initiated development. However, this also means that INSET and TPD needs to vary significantly across departments and individuals, making one-size-fits-all training less effective. They expressed a preference for modular, customizable INSET and TPD programs, where they can select sessions relevant to their subject areas or levels of expertise. As a university, they face distinct challenges in higher education pedagogy, especially in equipping faculty with skills to (1) design research-driven course content; (2) facilitate critical thinking and independent learning among students; and (3) integrate academic research into teaching. Some faculty members expressed a need for instructional design training aligned with adult learning theories, outcome-based education (OBE), and blended learning models suited for university-level instruction. Note that this insight is less prevalent among respondents in Luzon and Visayas, which primarily address K-12 contexts. The school integrates social justice, community engagement, and values formation into its educational mission. Teachers emphasized the need for INSET and TPD that helps them (1) contextualize social issues (e.g., conflict, poverty, environmental degradation) in classroom discussions; (2) foster values-based education in a culturally sensitive and inclusive manner; (3) engage students in service learning and community immersion programs. There is a call for training on how to integrate social justice themes across disciplines without diluting academic rigor. Unlike schools still grappling with basic technology use, teachers expressed interest in leveraging more advanced educational technologies, such as (1) learning analytics for tracking student engagement and performance; (2) virtual labs and simulations for STEM education; (3) tools for hybrid/HyFlex learning models. Faculty members seek training on instructional technologies that go beyond basic learning management system (LMS) usage (e.g., *Moodle*, *Canvas*, *Blackboard*, *Google Classroom*) and instead focus on maximizing student interaction and feedback through tech-enhanced pedagogies. As part of its academic culture, teachers are also encouraged to engage in research, publication, and scholarly dialogue. Unique to this context is the need for mentorship programs, where junior faculty can be guided in (1) designing and conducting action research or pedagogical research; (2) writing for academic journals and conference presentations; (3) and securing research funding and grants. INSET and TPD in this regard is seen as a means not only to enhance teaching quality, but also to contribute to institutional knowledge production and thought leadership in the region. Finally, being situated in Mindanao, the school operates in a multicultural and multi-faith context, often in areas affected by historical and ongoing conflict. Faculty members seek training on (1) conflict-sensitive pedagogy, promoting peace, inclusion, and reconciliation in classroom interactions; (2) culturally responsive teaching that respects and integrates Muslim, Christian, and Indigenous worldviews; and (3) navigating sensitive topics in a way that promotes dialogue and understanding, rather than division. This is a distinctive concern given the sociopolitical dynamics of Zamboanga and surrounding regions.

4.3.3. Salient themes with potential ways forward

From the common and unique themes gleaned from the FGD with our sample schools, we summarize in Table 3 salient themes with potential ways forward. This will serve as our basis for policy recommendations in the latter part of our study. We can construe from Table 4 that teachers from both public and private schools articulated urgent needs for personalized, practical, and accessible training. Addressing the disconnect between teacher needs and existing training systems, while expanding support for mental health, technology integration, and equity in access, can significantly enhance teaching quality and teacher satisfaction. These findings underscore the need for evidence-based, teacher-informed policy reforms in PD systems across the Philippine education sector.

Table 3. Salient themes from FGD with potential ways forward

#	Salient themes	Potential ways forward
1	Alignment of INSET and TPD with teacher-identified needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate feedback loops between TNAs and actual training content in both public and private schools. • Develop differentiated INSET and TPD tracks for lower and upper-grade teachers, SPED teachers, and subject-specific instructors.
2	INSET and TPD supportive of teachers' mental health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalize mental health programs for educators, including stress management workshops, counseling support, and emotional intelligence training. • Encourage a holistic approach to teacher well-being in both training content and school policy.
3	Improvement of access and quality of INSET and TPD in private schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand DepEd's INSET access to private schools through public-private partnerships, voucher systems, or funded slots. • Consider subsidizing travel costs or developing regional training hubs to make TPD more inclusive.
4	Innovation of INSET and TPD delivery modes beyond online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift from mandatory online INSET and TPD to blended formats with flexible scheduling, interactive tools, and localized delivery. • Encourage face-to-face training options, especially skill-based or experiential content.
5	Integration of AI and technology INSET and TPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design modular courses on AI use in education, digital literacy, and ethical considerations for both public and private school teachers. • Support peer-led innovation laboratories or technology mentoring systems to help educators adapt to fast-changing technological landscapes.
6	Support for teachers assigned to extracurricular and non-specialist roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer coaching and extracurricular management training to help teachers assigned beyond their core teaching subjects. • Institutionalize cross-disciplinary training modules for teachers reassigned to unfamiliar grade levels or subjects.

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

4.3.4. Anchors of INSET and TPD design

As gleaned from the common thrusts, unique insights, and salient themes, Table 4 synthesized the qualitative information from FGD into a comparative needs matrix based on our sample schools, which can provide a sample approach in designing a more effective and responsive training programs. From Table 5, the design of INSET and TPD can be anchored on eight anchors namely (1) training focus, (2) training delivery preferences, (3) behavior/classroom management needs, (4) teacher-focused mental health needs, (5) technology use, (6) training issues, (7) preferred training style, and (8) teacher aspirations.

Table 4. Comparative needs matrix based on sample schools

#	Anchors	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
1	Training focus	Practical, classroom-based strategies aligned with local context.	Classroom and behavior management, contextualized learning strategies.	Instructional design, innovative pedagogy, department-level focus.
2	Delivery preferences	In-person preferred; hands-on workshops.	In-person, experiential training; limited tolerance for online formats.	In-person + webinars with external experts.
3	Behavior/classroom management needs	High concern post-pandemic; multi-grade classroom dynamics.	High concern; managing diverse behaviors, mental health, and special needs.	Moderate concern; focused more on learner engagement strategies.
4	Teacher-focused mental health needs	Overwhelmed by administrative workload; need for stress relief training.	High stress from technology adaptation and workload; seek coping strategies.	Stress from multiple roles; desire for work-life balance tools.
5	Technology use	Lack of technological resources; basic digital skills needed.	Basic to moderate technology adaptation needs; prefer simple, usable tools.	Desire to integrate EdTech effectively; need for hands-on technological skills training.
6	Current INSET/TPD issues	TNA not reflected in training delivery; frustration over irrelevant content.	TNA conducted but not used; low engagement due to generic content.	Generic, top-down; limited alignment with actual needs.
7	Preferred training style	Practical, localized, hands-on; simulations and mock teaching.	Interactive, role-playing, and group work; dislike lecture-style formats.	Interactive, department-led, with expert facilitators.
8	Teacher aspirations	Effective classroom management, student engagement	Improve teaching effectiveness, gain practical tools for immediate use	Career advancement, certifications, recognition of expertise

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

From Table 4 (i.e., develop differentiated INSET and TPD tracks for lower and upper-grade teachers, SPED teachers, and subject-specific instructors) and Table 5 (i.e., TNA conducted but not used; low engagement due to generic content), we can design differentiated INSET and TPD designs for our sample schools. Table 6 highlighted differentiated training proposals.

Table 5. Differentiated training proposals based on sample schools

School location	Customized INSET/TPD training proposal
Luzon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom management bootcamps with focus on post-pandemic education 2. Localized mental health and stress relief sessions for teachers 3. Basic technology training with resource support
Visayas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Behavior management and inclusive education strategies 2. Hands-on, experiential teaching methods 3. Teacher wellness programs and simple tech use workshops
Mindanao	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Department-level pedagogical innovation series 2. Technology integration workshops with industry experts 3. Mentorship and leadership training for career progression

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

Thus, through the FGDs we have conducted, we underscore the critical importance of designing INSET and TPD programs based on teachers' needs and preferences. While current programs are informative, there are accessibility and funding issues that hinder participation. Private schools are particularly affected by financial constraints. On the other hand, public schools face accessibility issues due to the lack of equipment and connectivity to participate in virtual training programs, or due to limited funding or slots available for in-person programs.

While current TNA systems are in place, implementation needs improvement. For public schools, training needs identified by teachers are not always reflected on INSET programs conducted. On the other hand, funding and sponsorship influence implementation of training in private schools. Programs on mental health, stress management, classroom and behavior management, are some of the identified topics currently needed by the teachers.

While online seminars and webinars have broadened participation especially during the pandemic, the financial cost of attending these specialized training often limits the number of teachers who can benefit, especially in private educational institutions that struggle with budget constraints, as mentioned earlier in the results discussion.

The scheduling of PD activities is a crucial factor in the success of INSET and TPD. Schools conducted regular faculty meetings and dedicated in-service training sessions by aligning them with key periods in the academic year. Typically, school-based training is conducted at the start and mid-year to allow its teachers to reflect on previous challenges and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. However, recent policy changes have reduced the number of designated INSET periods, which teachers argue limits their ability to engage in continuous learning. The reduction from two dedicated INSET breaks to one has raised serious concerns about whether PD opportunities will remain sufficient as they are.

Table 6. Teacher-driven perspectives on INSET and TPD

Current programs	TNA	Policy implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current programs, while informative, are generic, not targeted, and not engaging. • Most of the programs are lecture-based and conducted virtually, leading to low engagement and motivation among teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the respondents identified mental health for both teachers and students as a pressing concern. • Equipping teachers with mental health and wellness strategies may help them cope better with stress and an increasing workload. • Programs on classroom and behavior management will also help teachers deal with students' behavior and mental health issues accordingly, to maintain a positive learning environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs should be designed according to teachers' preference and needs identified through a cohesive training needs assessment. • Training programs should also be motivating and engaging for teachers. • Optimizing the current training needs assessment systems in place can be a good start in reviewing how INSET and TPD are designed and implemented.

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

The effectiveness of INSET and TPD programs lies in establishing an ecosystem among schools that prioritize continuous learning. PD must not be treated as a mere compliance requirement but as an integral part of their growth and success. Training should not only cater to students' needs, but also that of teachers. As emphasized in the discussion above, training

programs should be both informative and effective. This reinforces the idea that meaningful PD must go beyond technical instruction and cultivate a strong sense of purpose among educators. By addressing systemic barriers and refining training approaches, schools can ensure that INSET and TPD programs truly fulfill their goal of empowering teachers to provide high-quality education and foster meaningful learning experiences for students.

4.4. KII findings

In this discussion, we present the state of INSET and TPD in the Philippines from the perspective of school leaders/administrators and sector experts as gleaned from KIIs conducted with them. We describe how INSET and TPD programs are designed, implemented, and monitored. We explore the current needs assessment tools used, current INSET and TPD programs and modalities, and ways forward identified by the key informants. Seven respondents participated in the interviews, providing expert insights coming from both government and private sector.

4.4.1 Current systems and challenges for INSET and TPD

Systems for INSET and TPD for both private and public schools face implementation issues in different contexts. For DepEd schools, TPD programs start with the three-year *Induction Program for Beginning Teachers* dedicated to all teachers in their first three years of working within the system (as seen in Table 1). This is succeeded by regular PD programs initiated at the national level. The induction program aims to bridge the gap between teacher preparation and DepEd expectations. For INSET, delivered through the SDO, content is designed from data reported by the Teacher Development Needs Study (TDNS). DepEd surveys teachers through the Electronic Self-Assessment (ESAT) to identify their INSET needs. However, constraints on budget, time, and manpower hinder optimization of data for program implementation. ROs have limited personnel handling the implementation and monitoring of TPD programs. DepEd teachers now only have one INSET break per SY. Due to budget constraints, training is conducted virtually. And while this accommodates a large number of teachers at once, it does not match the teachers' preference. LACs on the other hand, are designed to be conducted at the school level. This aims to address issues and challenges specific to the school's context. LAC sessions also serve as knowledge sharing and debriefing platforms for teachers. It was also reported that DepEd offices and schools around the country tend to operate independently, leading to limited institutional collaboration and duplication of effort resulting in inefficient implementation of INSET and TPD. Besides the difficulty of navigating from one office to another, DepEd offices acting independently from one another hinders opportunities from learning from one another and maximizing resource use.

For private schools, challenges in planning and financing training programs were highlighted. While the *Manual for Private Schools* stipulates that a significant portion of the budget should be allocated to teacher salaries and PD, on-ground realities tell a different story. Small private schools find it challenging to invest heavily in training when teacher turnover rates are high. School administrators do not see the rewards of funding these PD opportunities, knowing that their teachers may leave for better opportunities in the public school system after a few years. Private schools also must plan and implement their own training programs, unlike for DepEd where there is a nationwide schedule and budget allocation for INSET.

For both public and private school leaders, the need for a holistic approach to development of TPD programs was emphasized. Applying learning principles, training programs must be both

cognitive and affective. Aside from the content knowledge, technical, and pedagogical skills that INSET and TPD programs provide (e.g., numeracy and literacy), training content can also focus on strengthening teaching values by emphasizing virtues, motivation, and the teacher's role in shaping students' lives. Training programs on classroom management strategies, behavioral management, and mental health are also preferred by teachers.

Unique insights were solicited from key informants from the region, emphasizing the need for inclusive approaches to PD. Specifically, some teachers recognized by the community are considered teachers and not just licensed ones. Their teachers also respond to duties beyond what is specified on DepEd's standards. Aside from content knowledge, teachers have to educate students on the realities of Mindanao, including the presence of armed conflict, cultural diversity, and long-standing social and economic issues. They are not just expected to deliver quality learning but also build an environment that is safe and inclusive for students. This underscores the importance of diversity and inclusivity in education systems, reinforcing the need for contextualized approaches to policies and programs. From the key issues raised by our key informants, Table 7 summarizes salient themes with potential ways forward.

Table 7. Salient themes from KIIs and potential ways forward

#	Salient themes	Potential ways forward
1	There is limited institutional collaboration, duplication of efforts, and inefficiencies in implementing INSET and TPD programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen collaboration among DepEd SDOs to identify needs and gaps to be filled by INSET and TPD programs • Harmonize workflow and planning process for INSET and TPD
2	INSET and TPD should be both cognitive and affective to create lasting impacts on teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage a holistic approach to designing INSET and TPD to include teachers' values and well-being • Incentivize INSET and TPD by providing CPD units and other benefits relevant to teachers • Contextualize INSET and TPD to suit various needs and sensitivities from different regions
3	Implementation of INSET and TPD programs needs to be monitored to ensure that all teachers from both public and private schools are provided with equal opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand DepEd's INSET access to private schools through public-private partnerships, voucher systems, or funded slots. • Consider opening INSET programs to private schools within the same district • Establish a resource-sharing mechanism for TPD between public and private teachers
4	Training design and delivery are driven by budget instead of teacher preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use feedback mechanisms to identify effective modes of training delivery • Address geographical, infrastructural, and logistical barriers to participation
5	Manpower and budget constraints continue to hinder implementation of INSET and TPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address gaps in manpower leading to implementation issues
6	Training Needs Assessments are in place, but challenges remain unresolved to enable data-driven implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have mechanisms to assess learning deficiencies • Use TDNS to identify INSET and TPD themes • Increase funding and support private-public partnerships for TPD programs

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

Multiple national and local programs place competing demands on the teachers' time, making it challenging to prioritize TPD efforts effectively. Bureaucratic impediments hinder resolution of manpower and budget constraints. This leads to the persistence of inefficiency in the current

TPD and INSET systems in place. With this, it is essential to recalibrate systems in place, tailored to teachers' needs, preferences, and context. Resolving barriers to implementation and participation is crucial in ensuring efficiency of INSET and TPD. Table 8 summarizes the current INSET and TPD programs, TNA tools, and policy implications gleaned from the KIIs.

Table 8. Key informants' perspectives on INSET and TPD

Current programs	TNA Tools	Policy implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>Three-year Induction Program for Beginning Teachers</i> aims to address the gap between teacher preparation and DepEd expectations INSET programs are delivered once a year through the SDO LACs are designed for school-based weekly sessions Some private schools have Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) established as networks for knowledge sharing and mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DepEd uses TDNS to identify INSET needs Private schools conduct school-level FGDs and surveys to design TPD programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs should be tailored to teachers' needs at different experience levels and subject expertise While training needs assessments are in place, constraints on budget and manpower should be resolved to enable improvements in design and implementation Collaboration among schools, both private and public, must be strengthened to ensure accessibility and quality of TPD programs

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

The KIIs underscored key issues in the perspectives of sector experts. Systemic barriers such as manpower and funding constraints must be addressed to enable aspired implementation echoed by school leaders. Even when there are TNAs in place, a data driven approach to INSET and TPD implementation requires streamlining of policies and communications, provision of budget, and hiring of support staff. It is imperative to resolve implementation barriers to achieve intended outcomes for INSET and TPD. Programs must be designed according to the needs and preference of teachers. However, school leaders and administrators also need adequate support to facilitate implementation.

4.5. Triangulation

Our triangulation process validated the thematic findings from the FGDs and KIIs conducted. Triangulation is achieved through a convergent parallel approach, where thematic patterns from FGDs were compared against insights from the KIIs, as well as publicly available documents from the national government, academic literature, and secondary research on TPD in the Philippines. This facilitates validation of whether concerns and needs expressed in both KII and FGD sessions have been echoed in institutional practices, as well as government reports and broader sectoral analyses from civil society groups and the academe. The triangulation matrix in Table 11, built from results in preceding tabulations, reflects the alignment, and at times divergence, between ground-level experiences of teachers and school administrators and the over-all systemic framework of both INSET and TPD in the Philippines.

4.5.1. Common thrusts across respondents

We have seen earlier that teachers from various regions in the Philippines revealed a number of shared concerns on the accessibility, consistency, and relevance of available INSET and TPD programs. They have also shared their aspirations towards better of professional

opportunities for both public and private school teachers across the country. The following common thrusts highlight some of the areas for improvement and opportunities to design more responsive and impactful training programs.

Need for targeted and contextualized training. The presence of misalignment in various PD opportunities, despite the formal conduct of TNAs, stems from two main factors. First, the TNAs conducted at the school and division levels are not always standardized or consistently implemented, either due to limited technical capacity, inconsistent tools, and lack of resources for thorough analysis. Second, even when the TNA results are available, they are not always used to inform regional or national training priorities, especially when training content is pre-determined by central policy directives or tied to budget utilization requirements. This disconnect results in the continued delivery of top-down and compliance-oriented topics that fail to reflect the actual needs identified by teachers in the field.

Educators have consistently emphasized that current INSET and TPD activities often lack specificity and relevance to their classroom realities. Despite the implementation of TNAs, many teachers feel that the training content seldom reflects the specific needs that they have identified. This sentiment has been reflected in numerous prior studies. Ganal et al. (2019) found that teachers expressed a need for professional training in areas such as content knowledge, use of information and communication technology (ICT), strategies for developing critical and creative thinking, and research-based knowledge and principles in teaching and learning. Similarly, Chin et al. (2022) highlighted that teachers' pedagogical and information technology (IT) skills requirements are primarily influenced by their prior PD experiences and their need to apply active learning and innovative teaching ideas. Mantilla et al. (2022) revealed that school-based INSET was relevant and useful for both school heads and teachers to perform their jobs better, suggesting the importance of contextualized training. These studies collectively reinforce the concerns raised by teachers in our own findings. For instance, while teachers have specifically requested session topics like differentiated instruction and inclusive education, most of them were often provided with more generic topics such as school leadership or policy updates instead. While these themes are undoubtedly important within the broader educational framework, they are not immediately applicable to the everyday instructional challenges that teachers are facing.

Table 9 presents a summary of the most frequently recurring topics in INSET and TPD RMs issued by DepEd Region X in 2024, based on a comprehensive analysis of 1,012 publicly-available RMs posted online. Data revealed a persistent misalignment between teachers' expressed training needs and the actual content delivered through formal PD channels. While topics such as MATATAG¹² curriculum implementation and training on resource development are well-represented in the regional level, essential themes that directly support teachers' pedagogical practices like inclusive education, differentiated instruction, and technology integration in teaching appear far less frequently, despite being repeatedly identified by teachers as pressing areas for upskilling. This disparity highlights the overrepresentation of structural or compliance-driven topics (e.g., SBM guidelines, leadership roles, monitoring and evaluation frameworks), and the underrepresentation of classroom-centered competencies. For instance, while almost 18 RMs directly focused on MATATAG curriculum implementation, only nine were devoted to inclusive education, and just six covered ICT integration, a key area of concern raised by Ganal et al. (2019) and Chin et al. (2022).

¹² The MATATAG curriculum, implemented by DepEd, aims to develop globally literate and future-ready citizens by focusing on individual learners, promoting holistic development, and emphasizing experiential and collaborative learning approaches. For more information, see <https://www.deped.gov.ph/matataqcurriculumk147/>.

Table 9. Categorization of INSET/TPD topics (DepEd Region X Memoranda, 2024)

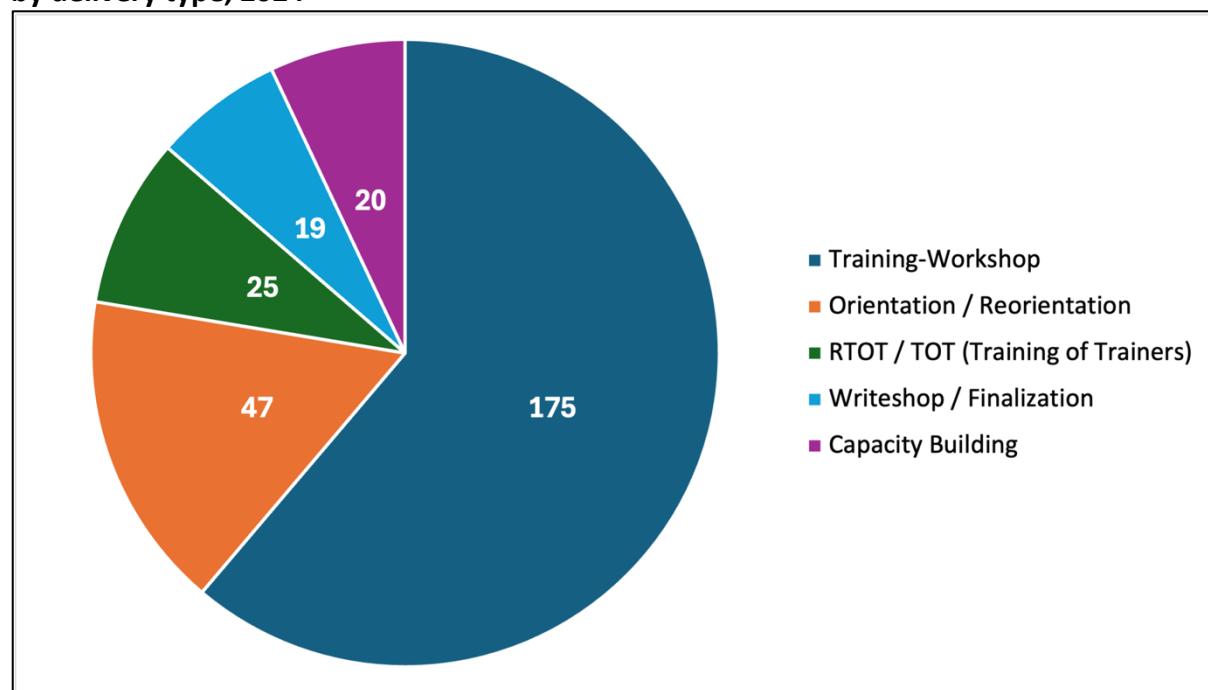
INSET/TPD Topic (Regional Level)	Number of RMs
MATATAG Curriculum Implementation	18
Reading Instruction/Science of Reading (SOR)	6
Alternative Learning System (ALS)	20
Mental Health and Psychological First Aid	9
Guidance and Counseling	20
Assessment and Classroom Observation	24
Gender and Development (GAD)	4
Inclusive Education/Special Education (SPED)	9
Lesson Exemplar/Resource Development	28
Positive Discipline/Child Protection	10
School-Based Management (SBM)/Leadership and Governance	36
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)	18
ICT/ LMS Orientation	6
Career Guidance/Life Skills	9
Others (e.g., Staff Work, Write shops, Trainers Methodology)	33

Note: Some of the RMs cover more than one topic.

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

Meanwhile, Figure 6 shows that training-workshops account for the majority of INSET and TPD activities, while regional training-of-trainers (RTOT) and orientation sessions appear less frequently. This suggests that while there is some effort in the regional level to decentralize training through cascade models, much of the delivery still leans on direct and structured workshops. However, the limited number of contextualized capacity-building activities may affect how effectively these trainings are adapted to specific classroom realities.

Figure 6. Categorization of INSET and TPD Activities based on DepEd Region X Memoranda, by delivery type, 2024



Note: Some of the RMs cover more than one topic.

Source: Constructed by the authors.

Prioritizing classroom and behavior management training. A significant concern among teachers is the growing complexity of student behaviors, in the aftermath of the pandemic. Key informants have noted a substantial increase in behavioral issues among their students, citing examples such as heightened anxiety, attention difficulties, and emotional dysregulation. These observations are consistent with broader global findings that suggest how pandemic-related disruptions have exacerbated mental health challenges among school-aged children (García and Weiss 2020; Loades et al. 2020). Recent studies also found that students are beginning to exhibit signs of trauma, as well as reduced coping mechanisms and social withdrawal post-pandemic. This indicates that prolonged school closures and isolation significantly impacted the social and emotional well-being of students (Imran et al. 2020; Fegert et al. 2020).

Hence, many teachers have expressed feeling ill-equipped to manage these challenges due to their limited training in trauma-informed teaching practice; echoing the need for more targeted and responsive TPD on the matter (Darling-Hammond and Hyler 2020; Kim et al. 2021). The same is true for the key informants of our study, where they expressed their strong demand for specialized training in behavior management strategies that are tailored to multi-grade classrooms, including practical methods for promoting positive discipline and classroom engagement. Traditional approaches are no longer seen as sufficient in managing their students, as they believe that social media plays a significant role in shaping the attitudes, attention spans, and interpersonal behavior of students. They also noted the importance of peer sharing and case study discussions with fellow teachers, in order to learn from each other's experiences in managing challenging classroom dynamics.

Emphasis on teachers' mental health and stress management. Related to the above-mentioned thrust is the mental health and well-being of teachers themselves. Educators from both public and private schools described feeling overwhelmed by increasing workload, which often include not only their teaching responsibilities, but also administrative tasks and extended work hours due to the adoption of online and blended learning in most schools (Han and Yin 2016; Orlanda-Ventayen and Ventayen 2021; Jimenez 2021). Key informants have raised the long-term need for mental health support mechanisms, including access to counseling services or mental health professionals, workshops on stress management techniques such as mindfulness, time management, and self-care practices, and support groups or peer networks for emotional support and resilience building.

These support strategies echo the recommendations of previous studies, which emphasized that fostering teacher well-being through mindfulness-based interventions and emotional regulation training can lead to improved classroom performance and student outcomes (Jennings and Greenberg 2009; Jennings 2015). Moreover, mindfulness, self-care, and stress management programs have been found to reduce teacher burnout (Hwang et al. 2017; von der Embse et al. 2019). Studies also suggest that institutional support, including peer networks and building leadership that prioritizes mental health, plays a critical role in sustaining teacher resilience and long-term occupational engagement (McCallum et al. 2017). Although DepEd, through its Disaster Risk Reduction Management Service (DRRMS), launched its mental health helpline system back in 2021, a 2022 country report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) pointed out however that there are “no national whole-of-education approach to support mental health promotion” in the Philippines (UNICEF 2022, 49).

This gap between policy and practice becomes more evident when we see that some DepEd ROs only began organizing regional mental health-related training sessions in 2024. In many cases, participants included school personnel who are not directly involved in either

instructional or psychosocial work, such as school dentists, which raises the question about the targeting of the intended beneficiaries of these TPD opportunities. Moreover, the number of participating teachers per division remained limited, with programs largely inaccessible to private school teachers. Prior to 2021, most mental health workshops were centrally organized by the national office. This means that regional participation to these trainings was highly restricted, and opportunities for localized implementation of the learning gained were minimal. These suggest that despite increased recognition of mental health in several school policy documents, equitable and targeted delivery of such programs remains a major challenge. Table 10 shows the RMs and regional advisories (RAs) issued by DepEd Region X, listing school-level mental health assessments, orientations, and training sessions.

Table 10. Selected regional mental health-related trainings by DepEd Region X 2018-2025

Date Issued	RM No.	Activity Title
November 7, 2024	RM 867, s. 2024	Regional School Mental Health Forum and Orientation on Mental Health Crisis Management
June 6, 2024	RM 418, s. 2024	Synergistic DepEd Response to Mental Health and Psychosocial Needs in Schools During Disasters and Emergencies PFA cum TIC Training Workshop for the DRRM Coordinators Medical Personnel Learner Rights
July 29, 2021	RM 395, s. 2021	Invitation to Watch the Mental Health and Psychological Support Services (MHPSS) Program
February 4, 2021	RM 51, s. 2021	Mental Wellness Webinar for the Frontliners of Education*
January 23, 2018	RM 57, s. 2018	Training on Mental Health and Psychological Support Providers (School Mental Health)

* Training organized by a private organization.

Note: Some RMs were not included in the table since they were not directly related to the conduct of training activities. These excluded memos were about administrative matters, such as posting schedules, changes in dates, or corrections to previously issued RMs.

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

Challenges with online training delivery. The shift from physical to virtual INSET and TPD sessions during the pandemic exposed barriers to effective online learning for teachers. Some of the common challenges cited in these discussions include lack of equipment such as personal laptops or tablets; unreliable internet connections, particularly in more remote areas; and low levels of engagement during online sessions, with some teachers feeling disconnected or unable to participate actively as they have to attend to other activities where they are taking the online training (e.g., house, school).

These challenges are strongly corroborated by existing local literature, which provided empirical evidence of the systemic barriers that hindered effective PD in the Philippines during this period. One of the most recurring themes was the lack of access to appropriate technology and stable internet connection. In a study by Chin et al. (2022) involving 174 teachers in the NCR, their findings revealed that financial cost and lack of time were the two top barriers to PD, with many teachers citing their inability to afford digital devices and maintain reliable internet connectivity as a hindrance to participating in online training programs smoothly. Similarly, Espinosa et al. (2020) conducted a mixed-methods study among public school teachers and found that 62% of respondents lacked access to personal laptops, relying instead on shared or borrowed devices, which negatively impacted their engagement in TPD. The digital divide among teachers became even more evident in rural and remote areas. Lapada et al. (2020) surveyed public school teachers from all three island groups of the Philippines and

found that over 70% of respondents faced unstable internet connectivity constraining asynchronous tasks and synchronous learning sessions.

Low levels of engagement in online training sessions were also commonly reported. In the study of Garcia et al. (2023) on the experiences of junior high school teachers in Taguig City, many of their participants described online TPD as “one-way” and “detached,” with minimal interaction between facilitators and trainees. The authors noted that the lack of dynamic learning environments led to cognitive fatigue and low knowledge retention. This was echoed in Reimers and Schleicher’s (2020) global comparative study, which emphasized that countries without strong digital infrastructure and support systems for teachers experienced the highest rates of PD disengagement during the pandemic. Moreover, Daquila and Sasing (2021) highlighted that teachers missed the collaborative and peer-to-peer engagement found in face-to-face sessions. Their qualitative interviews with 35 public school teachers found that most participants expressed that online modules were often too theoretical and failed to simulate authentic classroom scenarios where they could practice new techniques with feedback. Similarly, Andaya (2021) found in her study of public school teacher training in the CALABARZON region that 83% of participants preferred face-to-face training formats, citing real-time interaction, hands-on activities, and instant feedback as critical for their learning. This sentiment is consistent with the findings of Flores and Swennen (2020), who argued that the relational and collaborative dimensions of teacher learning are difficult to replicate in virtual environments. These empirical findings demonstrate that while online TPD offered flexibility during a global crisis; in this case, the pandemic, it did not really adequately meet the pedagogical, emotional, and logistical needs of many public school teachers.

4.5.2. Unique insights

We also looked into the distinct insights drawn from each of the three island groups, reflecting their specific contexts, challenges, and priorities set in INSET and TPD opportunities. These unique perspectives shed light on the institutional nuances that may otherwise be overlooked in aggregated national-level discussions. Moreover, these underscore the importance of tailoring policy interventions to the local needs and capacities to make sure that the support for teacher training is both equitable and contextually grounded.

Luzon. Teachers emphasized the need for foundational training in pedagogy and assessment. They highlighted the necessity for basic yet comprehensive training on lesson planning, differentiated instruction, and authentic assessment. Many teachers, particularly new or young educators, feel underprepared in areas such as designing performance-based tasks and rubrics; aligning formative and summative assessments with learning competencies; and implementing scaffolding strategies for struggling learners. This indicates a pressing demand for foundational capacity building, compared to more advanced TPD needs seen in university contexts.

One specifically mentioned the urgent need for INSET and TPD programs focused on SPED, citing significant challenges in effectively instructing students with disabilities. Compounding these challenges is the societal stigma surrounding children with special needs and their educators. Some general education teachers, according to the respondent, perceive SPED as solely for “abnormal” students, which leads to misconceptions and biases that further isolate these learners and demoralize SPED teachers as a whole. The respondent believes that this concern reflects a broader issue in the Philippines, where many educators, both primary and secondary, feel unprepared due to insufficient specialized training in SPED. Previous studies have shown that inadequate teacher training and limited access to resources prevent effective

instruction for students with disabilities, leading to difficulties in curriculum modification and individualized teaching approaches (Espeño et al. 2024).

Visayas. Teachers from a private Catholic school in the Visayas shared unique insights shaped by their school's identity and local context. They talked about the importance of integrating faith-based values in everyday teaching, the difficulties of handling multi-grade classes, the need to make education more inclusive, the push to get teachers more involved in research, and the demand for specific PD programs. In their setting, Catholic values are expected to be part of every lesson; not just in Religion classes per se, but across all subjects. This can be hard to do, especially in subjects like Mathematics or Science. Teachers said they want training that helps them find simple and meaningful ways to include moral lessons in their teaching, guide ethical conversations in class, and improve activities like retreats and student formation sessions. This supports what Lapsley and Kelley (2022) also found that Catholic education plays a role in helping students grow morally and ethically through the curriculum.

Mindanao. One of the key points raised is the value that their schools place on innovation and professional autonomy. Many of the respondents shared that they are encouraged to try new teaching methods, design their own lessons, and continuously improve through self-initiated learning. Because of this, they prefer flexible and customizable training programs where they can choose topics that match their subjects and teaching needs. This aligns with Knowles' (1980) theory of andragogy, which underscores the importance of self-direction and experiential relevance in adult learning (Merriam and Bierema 2013). Previous literature on teacher agency have also affirmed that autonomy in professional learning enhances both motivation and impact, which is clearly reflected in Mindanao educators' preferences. However, some respondents have noted that this freedom actually can lead to uneven training opportunities across teaching departments. For example, STEM teachers may need very different training compared to those in the humanities, which is why they expressed a strong preference for department-level TPD planning and on-demand, modular content. This echoes Wei et al.'s (2009) findings that effective PD is most impactful when it is embedded in the teachers' specific content areas and teaching assignments.

Key informants discussed the unique realities of teaching in Mindanao, including the presence of armed conflict, cultural diversity, and long-standing social and economic issues. Faculty members are not only expected to teach academic subjects, but also to promote peace, respect cultural differences, and build inclusive classrooms as much possible. Programs like the Madrasah Education (DepEd Order No. 51, s. 2004) and the Indigenous Peoples Education Framework already support this, but many teachers said they still need more training in handling sensitive topics, as well as teaching students from different backgrounds, and promoting core values. This resonates with Cagasan and Tarrayo's (2022) findings on the importance of embedding peace and multicultural education in teacher training, especially in Mindanao-based institutions. With new policies like the 2020 Bangsamoro Education Code now in place, there's a strong foundation to expand teacher training in these areas.

Another challenge raised by Mindanao key informants is the physical distance to training venues. Many teachers shared that attending centralized INSET or TPD sessions often requires long hours of travel just to reach ROs or training centers, as some of these teachers are based in hinterland or geographically isolated areas. This not only results in additional transportation and accommodation costs from the part of the teacher, but it also disrupts classroom instruction, as they have to be away from their students for extended period of time. Because of this, some teachers are either unable or unwilling to participate in development programs, no matter how

relevant or well-designed it may be. To address this, the respondents recommended more localized or school-based training options, as well as expanded access to online or modular learning platforms. They also suggested that mobile training teams or regional clusters could help bring PD closer to remote schools.

4.5.3. Summary of triangulation

The triangulation of data from the FGDs, KIIs, and policy/literature review revealed both areas of convergence and divergence that shed light on the broader systemic conditions and institutional experiences surrounding INSET and TPD delivery in the Philippines. Several themes have consistently emerged across these sources, which validates the teachers' lived experiences with broader policy gaps. These include (1) the misalignment of current training with teacher-identified needs, (2) heightened demand for behavior management and mental health support post-pandemic, (3) limitations of online training modalities, and (4) budget-driven delivery systems that overlook teacher preferences.

The FGDs emphasized the realities of teacher fatigue, classroom challenges, and digital inequities among public school teachers, something that was also echoed in the KII data, although less articulated than in the FGD. Moreover, while the KIIs focused more on the structural barriers in INSET and TPD delivery such as manpower constraints, decentralized implementation, and the limitations of TNA processes, the FGDs provided an affective and contextual depth to these systemic issues. Using literature and publicly-accessible policy documents further reinforced these findings. For instance, the underrepresentation of classroom-based topics like inclusive education and differentiated instruction in DepEd Region X RM aligns with the widespread perception among public school teachers that the training opportunities available for them is often too generic or compliance-oriented.

Equally important, divergences were also observed in the analysis. KII respondents, particularly from DepEd and private school administrations, described mechanisms like LACs and Induction Program as effective structures for PD. Yet in the FGDs, many teachers feel these mechanisms are underutilized or inconsistently implemented, particularly in private schools with limited resources. Moreover, while some policy documents highlight recent initiatives on teacher wellness, many teachers expressed minimal awareness or access to these programs. Thus, a gap between policy formulation and ground-level program delivery exists.

Table 11 shows the triangulation matrix developed to systematically compare thematic patterns from the FGDs and KIIs against the insights gathered from existing literature and policy documents. Each thematic area is assessed across the three data sources to identify points of **convergence** (alignment across sources), **partial convergence** (where alignment is present, but implementation is limited), and **divergence** (where experiences differ across levels). This matrix supports the study's overall validation strategy and provides a nuanced understanding of how teacher experiences in PD opportunities intersect with national policy frameworks, regional implementation systems, and institutional realities on the ground.

Across the eight thematic areas analyzed in the study, the matrix reveals a dominant pattern of convergence and partial convergence, with no cases of divergence observed. Full convergence was noted in five areas namely, the misalignment between teacher needs and training content, the growing demand for behavioral management strategies, the inadequacy of online training delivery, the need for experiential and hands-on TPD, and the limited PD access for private school teachers. These themes were consistently supported across FGDs, KIIs, and

document/literature reviews, indicating shared understanding of these issues across stakeholders. Partial convergence, meanwhile, was observed in three areas, which are teacher mental health, differentiated training by context, and geographic barriers. In these cases, policies or initiatives exist in principle but fall short in terms of reach or practical implementation, especially in underserved and geographically isolated areas. The absence of divergence across the data sources suggests a strong alignment in the recognition of core challenges in TPD across all system levels. However, this alignment also underscores a persistent implementation gap, where systemic constraints continue to limit the responsiveness of TPD to the actual and evolving needs of teachers.

Table 11. Triangulation Matrix of Key Issues in INSET and TPD

#	Theme	Source of Insights		Validation	
		FGD	KII	Document and Literature	
1	Misalignment of TPD with teacher-identified needs	Teachers report generic content despite TNA; feel unheard in training design	TNAs exist (ESAT/TDNS) but are not implemented due to budget and manpower limits.	DepEd Region X memos emphasize MATATAG, SBM, leadership; only 9/1012 RMs mention SPED (see Table 9); Ganal et al. (2019); Chin et al. (2022); low rates of training participation observed across regions and subject areas according to the latest SF7 data available (see Figure 5)	Convergence; consistent evidence of systemic mismatch between teacher needs and training design across all data sources
2	Behavior and classroom management post-pandemic	Teachers observe increase in student behavioral issues post-pandemic; need trauma-informed strategies	School heads recognize behavior management as a pressing need; LACs intended to address this	Student trauma and behavior issues post-pandemic discussed in García and Weiss (2020); Loades et al. (2020); Imran et al. (2020); Fegert et al. (2020).	Convergence; all sources confirm the urgent need for behavior-related training in response to post-pandemic challenges
3	Teacher mental health and stress	Teachers report burnout, lack of support systems, desire for counseling and stress relief mechanisms	Mental health acknowledged as a need, but DepEd lacks full-scale programs	UNICEF (2022) noted lack of national whole-of-education mental health system; DRRMS helpline policy noted but gaps persist.	Partial convergence; policy recognition exists, but support systems remain weak or inaccessible at the implementation level

4	Challenges with online training	Lack of personal devices, poor internet connectivity, low engagement in online TPD; preference for face-to-face instead	Shift to online was cost-driven; acknowledged to be ineffective for hands-on learning	Chin et al. (2022); Espinosa et al. (2020); Lapada et al. (2020) reported low ICT access, poor internet, limited engagement in rural schools	Convergence; strong agreement across various data sources that online delivery is ineffective and inequitably accessed among teachers
5	Lack of experiential and practical training	Teachers prefer demo teaching, simulations, hands-on workshops over lecture-style formats	TPD should be both cognitive and affective; practical learning methods recommended	Darling-Hammond and Hyler (2020); Kim et al. (2021); Daquila and Sasing (2021); Andaya (2021) emphasized value of experiential training	Convergence; all sources support the need to shift to more hands-on, practice-based training modalities
6	Differentiated training by context	Mindanao teachers prefer modular/custom tracks; Some Luzon teachers seek SPED-specific TPD	Training design is centralized; insufficient tailoring to school-level contexts	Wei et al. (2009); Cagasan and Tarryao (2022) supported context-sensitive and modular PD designs; DepEd national policy lacks regional customization	Partial convergence; while policy acknowledges the need, actual implementation remains centralized and generic
7	Resource constraints (especially private schools)	Private school teachers struggle to access training due to funding and support gaps	Private school administrators hesitate to invest due to high turnover among their teachers; lack of public-private resource sharing	<i>Manual for Private Schools</i> advocates PD investment; implementation is weak; Orlanda-Ventayen and Ventayen (2021); Jimenez (2021)	Convergence; all sources point to private school teachers being left out of mainstream training ecosystems
8	Geographic and logistical barriers	Mindanao teachers in the hinterlands face long travel times and limited TPD access	Aware of logistical issues; no long-term, structural solution yet (e.g., mobile TPD, regional hubs)	Policy-level responses to remote teacher access limited; workshop records in Table 10 show few localized training options available in Region X.	Partial convergence; challenges are recognized, but the adoption of long-term sustainable and structural solutions are still lacking

Source: Constructed by the authors.

These triangulated findings also echo the longstanding concerns that were previously raised by the World Bank (2016), which identified two persistent issues in the INSET and TPD ecosystem in the Philippines: (1) the weak alignment of training content with actual teacher needs, and (2) the late or inefficient release of funds for teacher development. Unfortunately, the results of this study suggest that these same systemic bottlenecks continue to affect the relevance, delivery, and accessibility of these programs nearly a decade later. Despite the establishment of the NEAP and the institutionalization of the PPST, many of the fundamental challenges remain, underscoring the need not just for new policy directives but for deeper structural reforms in training governance, fiscal execution, and accountability systems.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

We underscored the persistent challenges and systemic barriers that hinder the effective implementation of INSET and TPD programs. While these programs are designed to enhance teacher competencies and improve student learning, our findings reveal that issues of access, relevance, and delivery continue to be the biggest barriers to reaching the ideal state of teacher development in the Philippines.

In the process of addressing our research problem and objectives through document and literature reviews, FGDs, and KIIs, teacher-driven perspectives highlighted that TDP often lack alignment with classroom realities and emerging educational trends. Many teachers reported that while training sessions introduce innovative teaching strategies, the applicability of these methods in their specific contexts, such as resource-limited public schools, remains limited. Additionally, a one-size-fits-all approach in training modules often is not adequate to address the diverse needs of educators based on subject area, student demographics, and regional disparities. Another critical challenge is the limited accessibility and sustainability of INSET programs. Teachers, especially those in geographically remote or underfunded schools, often face difficulties in attending training due to financial constraints, lack of substitute teachers, and administrative workload. Moreover, continuity and follow-up mechanisms for these trainings are often weak, leading to minimal long-term impact. Without sustained support systems, the knowledge and skills gained from training tend to diminish over time, affecting their practical implementation in the classroom. Furthermore, our study highlighted the inconsistent integration of technology in INSET and TPD. While digital tools are increasingly being incorporated into PD programs, there remains a digital divide, with some teachers having limited access to reliable internet, devices, or digital literacy training. This disparity underscores the need for inclusive and adaptive approaches in technology-driven INSET initiatives. Finally, our study underscored the lack of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the effectiveness of INSET and TPD. Without clear key result areas, key performance indicators, and structured feedback mechanisms, it becomes challenging to assess whether INSET and TPD initiatives lead to tangible improvements in teaching practices and student achievement. Table 12 summarizes our answers to our research questions.

Table 12. Answers to research questions

Research questions	Response
What are the practices in allocating INSET and TPD program opportunities in schools?	Allocation of INSET and TPD opportunities in schools is guided by a combination of institutional policies, resource availability, and strategic priorities. From our document and literature review, FGDs, and KIIs, allocation can be based on needs (prioritize training opportunities based on identified skill gaps among teachers), experience (prioritize either newly hired or less experienced teachers to equip them with fundamental teaching strategies), schedule (rotation system to ensure all teachers have access to training opportunities over time), merit (teachers with outstanding performance are prioritized for advanced programs), budget (influenced by funding availability, DepEd guidelines, and school leadership decisions), priority (e.g., STEM, digital learning, inclusive education), and/or voluntary (teachers can self-nominate to encourage self-directed professional growth).
What are the gaps in implementation of INSET and TPD hindering improvement of teaching and learning outcomes?	While INSET and TPD programs are crucial for improving teaching quality, several gaps in implementation hinder effectiveness. From our document and literature review, FGDs, and KIIs, these challenges include: limited accessibility and unequal distribution of training opportunities; one-size-fits-all approach to training content; inadequate follow-through and classroom integration; lack of sustainable funding and support for TPD; insufficient use of technology and digital learning tools; training not linked to career growth and incentives; and weak monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms. These affect accessibility, participation, and the overall impact of such programs on teaching and learning outcomes.
How can INSET and TPD programs be designed and facilitated to improve teaching quality?	To effectively enhance teaching quality, INSET and TPD programs must be well-structured, context-specific, and responsive to the evolving needs of educators. Culling from Tables 3 to 8 and 11, strategies for designing and facilitating INSET and TPD programs that maximize leverage can be done by: aligning training content with teacher needs and learning gaps; using blended learning approaches for accessibility and flexibility; incorporating practical, hands-on learning and peer collaboration, strengthening mentorship, coaching, and post-training support; ensuring sustainable funding and institutional support; leveraging digital tools and AI to enhance training effectiveness; and strengthening monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

Table 13 presents elements that should be prioritized when designing INSET and TPD programs, derived from convergent themes based on qualitative data and desk reviews. The elements are also guided by Hygiene-Motivation theories, in alignment with the study's framework, underscoring the need for a teacher-driven approach in developing INSET and TPD programs. Anchored on motivation theories, this roadmap underscores the key elements for increased participation, better engagement, deeper learning, and improved teacher morale. The training foundations (hygiene factors) ensure teacher satisfaction and participation, while the motivating factors aim to drive engagement and establish the program's intrinsic value for teachers. Balancing the training foundations and motivating factors is crucial to ensure that the programs are not only attended for compliance but are also received as transformational learning experiences for teachers (Herzberg et al., 1959; Griffin et al., 2016).

Table 13. INSET and TPD roadmap checklist

Assessment of needs and contexts	TNA frameworks must include teachers' profiles (SF7) and performance ratings (including data from their Results-Based Performance Management System [RPMS], Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form [IPCRF], and classroom observation ratings). Teaching contexts should also be considered when designing INSET and TPD programs (school and community profile, living conditions, equipment availability, language, among others).	
	Depending on training delivery mode, logistics or equipment must cater to teachers' needs. In-person training programs should be conducted in a comfortable venue with adequate facilities and equipment. Transportation and accommodation should also be provided as needed. For online training programs, adequate equipment and stable connectivity must be ensured.	
Training foundations	Accessibility	Program design must be anchored on the Philippine Professional Development Framework and PPST, aligned with current policies and identified learners' needs.
	Monitoring and Feedback	Aside from gathering attendance sheets and feedback forms, teachers' reflections and perspectives may also be documented through succeeding LAC sessions. Teachers' performance may also be monitored post-training through classroom observations, to see improvements that may be attributed to the INSET or TPD program.
Motivating factors	Engagement	Program design must be experiential and collaborative to encourage engagement and learning.
	Relevance to teachers' roles	The relevance of training to teachers' professional and personal needs, as well as their current roles and goals should be established.
	Incentives	Aside from certificates, CPD units, NEAP recognition, or service credits, useful tokens or rewards may be provided to encourage attendance and participation.

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

5.2. Recommendations for DepEd and policymakers

To enhance accessibility and participation in INSET and TPD programs, DepEd and policymakers must adopt a strategic, inclusive, and data-driven approach to ensure equitable distribution of training opportunities and align PD initiatives with evolving educational demands. Table 14 outlines our proposed recommendations as gleaned from our findings above. By considering these for implementation, DepEd and policymakers can bridge the gaps in INSET and TPD, ensuring that Filipino teachers are well-equipped, continuously supported, and empowered to drive transformative learning experiences in the country's evolving education landscape.

Table 14. Policy framework for DepEd and policymakers

Overall policy direction	Specific ways forward
Institutionalize a sustainable and inclusive INSET and TPD framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a national INSET and TPD roadmap that ensures systematic and continuous teacher training rather than one-off or fragmented initiatives. Standardize competency-based training modules that align with DepEd's Learning Recovery Plan, 21st century skills, and global best practices.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a structured progression model for teachers, linking training participation to career advancement, performance-based incentives, and leadership roles.
Address accessibility gaps through financial and logistical support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase budget allocation for INSET and TPD, particularly for schools in remote and underprivileged areas. • Provide financial aid, travel allowances, and stipends to enable teachers, especially those from marginalized schools, to participate in face-to-face training programs. • Ensure substitution mechanisms (such as teacher relievers) so educators can attend training without disrupting classes.
Promote blended and technology-enabled learning for teacher development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale up the use of DepEd LMS and other digital platforms for on-demand, modular, and self-paced INSET and TPD programs. • Provide technology grants to teachers, ensuring access to gadgets, stable internet, and digital learning materials. • Improve the design quality of online training by promoting interactive formats, peer learning components, real-time discussions, and scenario-based applications to increase the levels of engagement and retention among the teacher-participants. • Conduct required feedback loops after each online TPD module to identify areas for instructional design improvement. • Differentiate online modules by teacher career stage, subject matter, and school context (e.g., urban vs. rural, public vs. private, primary vs. secondary). • Strengthen partnerships with EdTech firms, higher education institutions (HEIs), and private sector players to enhance INSET and TPD content and delivery.
Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and research-driven policymaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a data-driven monitoring and impact assessment system to track training effectiveness and measure improvements in teaching performance. • Conduct regular teacher needs assessments to ensure training programs address real-world classroom challenges. • Foster action research and encourage educators to document best practices, creating a repository of localized and scalable teacher development strategies.
Institutionalize partnerships for capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen collaboration with State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), local governments, and private institutions to expand INSET and TPD offerings. • Encourage public-private partnerships to fund innovative teacher training models and resource development. • Establish regional centers of excellence that serve as hubs for continuous teacher training, mentorship, and peer collaboration.
Enhance DepEd SF7 for better monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve SF7 by including additional metadata fields such as training topic, number of hours, and delivery modality (e.g., online, blended, face-to-face) for each teacher registered in the system, both primary and secondary levels. • Include indicators of perceived usefulness or feedback ratings from teacher participants after training completion, either directly in SF7 or via integrated systems.

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

5.3. Recommendations for educational institutions

Together with DepEd and policymakers, educational institutions also play a vital role in ensuring that INSET and TPD programs effectively enhance teaching quality and improve learning outcomes. Schools, universities, and training providers must take proactive steps to create an educational ecosystem of continuous learning, collaboration, and innovation. Alongside Table 14, we outlined recommendations in Table 15 on how educational institutions can optimize INSET and TPD initiatives. By considering these recommendations for implementation, schools contribute to an enabling environment for lifelong learning, professional excellence, and instructional innovation, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes and a reformed Philippine education system.

Table 15. Policy framework for educational institutions

Overall policy direction	Specific ways forward
Institutionalize a comprehensive and needs-based INSET and TPD program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a national INSET and TPD framework anchored on long-term teacher career growth and aligned with the PPST. Shift from compliance-based training toward structured and context-specific TPD plans that respond to evolving school community needs. Clearly define the roles of NEAP, regional offices, SDOs, and school heads in training design and delivery. Conduct regular skills and competency assessments to ensure that training programs address practical classroom challenges and evolving pedagogical trends. Adopt a progressive professional learning model that supports teachers at different career stages, from novice educators to master teachers. Differentiate training programs by grade level (elementary, junior high, senior high), subject specialization (e.g., STEM, SPED, TLE), and local teaching conditions (e.g., multigrade, conflict-affected areas) to ensure contextual relevance and pedagogical applicability.
Strengthen onsite and school-based training initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish PLCs where teachers can share best practices, discuss challenges, and collaboratively develop teaching strategies. Encourage peer mentoring and coaching programs, pairing experienced educators with early-career teachers to foster continuous professional growth. Implement <i>Lesson Study and Action Research</i> models to promote reflective teaching practices and evidence-based instructional improvements. Develop a school-based TPD fund to ensure that training opportunities are accessible to all teachers, particularly those in under-resourced areas.
Leverage digital and hybrid learning for teacher development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize the use of e-learning platforms, webinars, and microlearning modules to provide flexible, self-paced PD opportunities. Facilitate regular training on digital literacy, instructional technology, and AI-driven educational tools to enhance teachers' capacity for tech-integrated pedagogy. Invest in school-level ICT infrastructure to ensure teachers have access to stable internet access and digital resources.
Strengthen institutional partnerships for capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with HEIs, teacher training centers, and private sector organizations to expand access to specialized training programs. Engage with DepEd ROs, non-government organizations, and international education networks to introduce global best practices and innovative teaching strategies. Encourage faculty exchange programs, study visits, benchmarking to provide teachers with exposure to diverse teaching methodologies.

Implement a data-driven approach to teacher development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a systematic feedback mechanism where teachers can evaluate INSET and TPD programs, ensuring continuous improvement in training quality. Use learning analytics and performance monitoring tools to measure the impact of training on student learning outcomes. Encourage teacher-led research and innovation projects, fostering a culture of evidence-based instructional practices.
Recognize and incentivize teacher professional growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop institutional rewards and recognition programs to motivate teachers to actively participate in INSET and TPD programs. Integrate training participation into career progression and performance evaluation to reinforce the importance of continuous learning. Provide scholarships, research grants, and sabbatical opportunities for educators to pursue further studies and specialized training.

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

5.4. Recommendations for future studies

Further research is necessary in deepening our understanding of effective teacher training models, policy impacts, and long-term outcomes on student learning. Future studies can look into the gaps indicated in Table 16. By pursuing further studies on this area, we can generate empirical evidence to guide policy reforms, refine teacher development strategies, and ensure that professional learning remains adaptive, relevant, and impactful in the ever-evolving landscape of education.

Table 16. Areas for future studies

Overall theme	Specific ways forward
Longitudinal impact of INSET and TPD on teaching quality and student performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct longitudinal studies tracking teachers who undergo different INSET and TPD interventions and assess how these programs translate into improved instructional practices and student learning outcomes over time. Investigate which specific INSET and TPD ways forward mentioned in Tables 12 and 13 yield the most sustainable improvements in teaching effectiveness. Explore how TPD correlates with national and international assessments (e.g., PISA) to measure broader educational impacts.
Accessibility and equity in TPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze disparities in access to INSET and TPD programs between urban and rural schools, public and private institutions, and different socio-economic regions in the Philippines. Examine the barriers faced by teachers in remote, indigenous, or underprivileged communities in accessing INSET and TPD, and propose scalable solutions. Assess the effectiveness of financial incentives, government subsidies, and scholarship programs in increasing teacher participation in INSET and TPD.
Role of digital and hybrid learning in TPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the effectiveness of online, hybrid, and blended learning models in delivering INSET and TPD programs, particularly in a post-pandemic education landscape. Assess teacher perceptions, digital readiness, and technological barriers in adopting e-learning platforms for PD. Explore the potential of AI-powered learning analytics and personalized training pathways to enhance teacher learning experiences.

Policy and governance studies on teacher development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a comprehensive policy review to evaluate the alignment of current INSET and TPD frameworks with the National Education Development Plan, PPST, and DepEd's Learning Recovery Plan. Examine how budget allocations, funding mechanisms, and public-private partnerships influence the accessibility and quality of teacher training programs. Study the efficacy of teacher certification and accreditation processes to ensure that PD initiatives lead to meaningful career progression.
Comparative studies with international best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmark Philippine INSET and TPD practices against high-performing education systems such as Finland, Singapore, and South Korea to identify best practices for professional learning. Analyze how teacher training policies in ASEAN Member States compare with those in the Philippines and explore potential regional collaborations. Investigate the role of international education networks, academic exchanges, and study visits in enhancing teacher competencies.
Innovations in teacher training approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore alternative and innovative TPD models, such as micro-credentialing, competency-based training, and gamification, to improve teacher engagement and retention. Investigate the impact of teacher-led action research, school-based coaching, and collaborative PLCs on classroom innovation. Study the feasibility of personalized learning pathways for teachers, where training is tailored based on individual competencies and career goals.

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

Table 17 summarizes our objectives, key findings, and ways forward. Recommendations are aligned with the relevant roadmap element, and long-term vision defined in our framework.

Table 17. Matrix of objectives, key findings, and ways forward

Research objective	Current issues in INSET and TPD	Recommendations	Themes for further studies	Roadmap element	Long term vision
To map current INSET and TPD programs accessed by basic and secondary teachers, and assess their alignment with evolving instructional demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misalignment of TPD with teacher-identified needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutionalize comprehensive and needs-based INSET and TPD program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and governance studies on teacher development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of needs and contexts; Monitoring and Feedback; Relevance to teachers' roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced teaching quality
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior and classroom management post-pandemic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a data-driven approach to teacher development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longitudinal impact of INSET and TPD on teaching quality and student performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of needs and contexts; Monitoring and Feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Student Learning Experience Improved Learning Outcomes
To conduct TNA to identify what teachers need and how they prefer INSET and TPD to be delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher mental health and stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize and incentivize teacher professional growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility and equity in TPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of needs and contexts; Monitoring and Feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced teaching quality
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges with online training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address accessibility gaps through financial and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of digital and hybrid learning in TPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced teaching quality

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage digital and hybrid learning for teacher development 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of experiential and practical training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote blended and technology-enabled learning for teacher development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative studies with international best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement • Relevance to teachers' roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced teaching quality
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiated training by context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalize a sustainable and inclusive INSET and TPD framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovations in teacher training approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of needs and contexts • Accessibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced teaching quality
To consolidate policy recommendations for DepEd and related agencies based on teacher feedback and empirical analysis, toward a recalibrated and impact-driven teacher development system		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and research-driven policymaking 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misalignment of TPD with teacher-identified needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance DepEd SF7 for better monitoring and evaluation • Strengthen institutional partnerships for capacity building 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of needs and contexts; • Monitoring and Feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced teaching quality • Improved Learning Outcomes

Source: Tabulated by the authors.

As the Philippine education system strives for transformation, empowering teachers through robust, inclusive, and forward-thinking INSET and TPD programs is paramount. The effectiveness of any educational reform ultimately hinges on the competency, resilience, and continuous growth of its educators. By addressing systemic gaps, embracing innovation, and fostering a culture of lifelong learning, we can ensure that teachers are not only equipped with state-of-the-art pedagogies and tools but are also inspired and supported to drive meaningful change in the classroom. Therefore, a collective commitment from policymakers, educational institutions, and research communities is crucial in shaping teacher development strategies that will not only enhance instructional quality but also revitalize Philippine education and uplift the future generations of Filipinos. Citing the key theme of the EDCOM2 Year Two Report (2025), “it is only by fixing the foundations of our system could we build one that fulfills the promise of our people and the demands of this period of our history and the next.”

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8. Appendix

Appendix 1. FGD instrument

Title of Study: Facilitating Access and Participation to INSET and TPD

Purpose: This instrument was developed to guide focus group discussions with teachers from both basic and secondary education levels. The objective of this instrument was to explore their experiences, perspectives, and challenges in relation to professional development, in-service training, and their overall growth within the teaching profession.

Instructions to Facilitators: The following guide questions were used to stimulate discussion. Facilitators were instructed to probe further based on the participants' responses to gather deeper insights and clarify points when necessary. Not all questions needed to be asked verbatim or in order.

Guide Questions: Before the facilitator begins the interview, the key informant is asked to briefly introduce themselves. They are asked of their:

- Name
- Current teaching position and grade/subject level
- Years in teaching

I. On Academic Background of Teachers

1. Which INSET/TPD program module was the most inspiring for you?
2. How do you feel INSET/TPD has prepared you for teaching?
3. Are there areas in the national curriculum where you feel you have weaknesses that can be addressed through training?
4. What are the most important skills you developed during your degree or through INSET/TPD programs?

II. On Training

1. In your opinion, what is the most challenging aspect of teacher development training today?
2. What part of teacher development training concerns you the most?
3. What aspects of training are you most looking forward to, and why?
4. Which type or format of TPD is most effective for you (e.g., INSET, LAC, online courses)? Why?
5. Teacher development training is very demanding. How do you cope with the additional workload it brings?
6. What specific teacher development training do you need the most right now? How has your school/district/division/region addressed these needs?
7. What motivates you to join training programs?
8. What prohibits you from joining or fully participating in training programs?
9. What incentives have you received for participating in INSET/TPD programs?
10. What other incentives or benefits would you like to receive when attending training?
11. Are the INSET/TPD programs you've attended aligned with your professional and personal needs?
12. To what extent do existing INSET/TPD programs support your expected performance and career progression according to the PPST? Are there stages where more programs are needed?
13. Do you personally look for training opportunities outside those provided by DepEd or NEAP? How often?
14. Do all teachers in your school receive equal opportunities to attend INSET/TPD programs? Why or why not?
15. Aside from content- or subject-focused training, what other types of INSET/TPD do you believe are important for professional growth?
16. What would you do if you were not able to access INSET/TPD training?

After these questions, the participants were also asked if they had any questions for the facilitators or if they wished to raise clarifications, additional insights, or issues that were not covered in the guide. This allowed for a more open and responsive discussion, giving the key informants space to voice their concerns or emphasize points based on their lived experiences.

Appendix 2. KII instrument

Title of Study: Facilitating Access and Participation to INSET and TPD

Purpose: This instrument was designed to guide key informant interviews with education stakeholders (e.g., regional directors, school division superintendents, district supervisors, and school heads). The aim was to gather qualitative data on teacher management and teacher professional development practices across various levels of the education system.

Instructions to Facilitators: The following guide questions were used to stimulate discussion. Facilitators were instructed to probe further based on the participants' responses to gather deeper insights and clarify points when necessary. Not all questions needed to be asked verbatim or in order.

Guide Questions: Before the facilitator begins the interview, the key informant is asked to briefly introduce themselves. They are asked of their:

- Name
- Current position
- Office or school affiliated with
- Years in the position

I. On Teacher Management

1. How would you involve the school's teaching staff in the decision-making processes?
2. What changes in your schools or organizations would you like to implement?
3. Can you tell us your understanding of the relationship between instructional improvement, teacher evaluation, and student performance?
4. What do you expect from your teaching staff to maximize positive outcomes, and how do you make sure that they meet that standard?

II. On Teacher Training

1. In your own words, what would an effective INSET/TPD program look like for basic and secondary educational institutions? How do you evaluate training programs?
2. As a regional director/school division superintendent/district supervisor/school head, can you discuss any steps you have taken to improve the performance of teachers under your jurisdiction?
3. How do you view our current INSET/TPD program procedure, implementation, and evaluation? Would you change it?
4. Are all teachers given equal opportunity to attend DepEd-NEAP or external TPD programs? How is this ensured by the region/division/district/school? What prohibits it?
5. How would you support a teacher to help them improve student success in their classes?
6. How do you assess teacher training needs?
7. Are INSET/TPD training programs designed to address areas of concern identified by prior evaluation or discussion? (e.g., from LAC sessions)
8. To what extent do the existing INSET/TPD training programs support the career progression of teachers based on the PPST? Are there areas or stages that need the development of more programs?
9. How do you motivate teachers to participate in INSET/TPD programs? Are there any repercussions in place for those who fail to attend training programs?
10. What incentives aside from CPD units can teachers gain when attending training programs? How do we incentivize them to take INSET/TPD programs?
11. How does NEAP ensure equal access to and effective participation of teachers in INSET/TPD programs?

12. What factors do you/your organization consider in selecting target participants and recipients of your INSET/TPD programs, in creating/designing them?

After these questions, the informants were also asked if they had any questions for the facilitators or if they wished to raise clarifications, additional insights, or issues that were not covered in the guide. This allowed for a more open and responsive discussion, giving the key informants space to voice their concerns or emphasize points based on their lived experiences.

Appendix 3. FGD findings

A.3.1. Key findings from Luzon Public School

Teachers prefer training on mental health and classroom management beyond content and pedagogy

Teachers expressed a strong preference for professional development programs focusing on mental health, classroom management, and behavior management, in addition to subject-content and pedagogy training. Post-pandemic classroom diversity presents increasing challenges. The majority of respondents emphasized that training programs on classroom and behavior management are essential for enhancing the classroom environment, improving student engagement, and enriching the learning experience. Employing classroom management strategies to create a learning-conducive environment remains one of a teacher's primary responsibilities. However, behavioral differences and challenges are often inevitable, potentially increasing stress levels among both students and teachers (Sanchez Solarte 2011; Parsonson 2012). The FGDs underscored the importance of classroom and behavior management training in addressing the rapidly changing needs of learners. One SPED teacher expressed the need for additional training to better support students with diverse disabilities in a single classroom. Another teacher remarked that behavior management training would enable them to address students' mental health challenges more effectively. Many teachers also noted that the pedagogical and motivational strategies introduced during their pre-service education may no longer align with the needs of today's students, thus highlighting the necessity for supplementary in-service professional development programs. Teachers have additionally emphasized their need for mental health and stress management support. They asserted that teachers' well-being must also be prioritized, alongside efforts to manage students' mental health and behavior. A significant portion of respondents reported experiencing high levels of stress and mental health struggles. Some shared that mental health programs should be more targeted; for instance, some teachers reported struggling with postpartum depression, while others described a loss of self-confidence when unable to keep pace with technological developments. When asked to identify the programs they needed most, the majority cited strategies for supporting mental health—both their own and that of their students.

Professional development is actively practiced through both formal and informal learning engagements.

Professional development systems are actively being implemented. Teachers participate in regular LAC sessions, annual INSET, and other learning engagements, both formal; that is, organized by the DepEd, and informal, such as peer-to-peer sharing sessions during breaks or after classes. Respondents demonstrated strong collegial relationships, with Master Teachers actively mentoring their peers. According to several participants, they benefit greatly from their expertise in classroom management and parent engagement. In turn, younger teachers reported supporting their senior colleagues who face difficulties integrating technology into classroom instruction. Informal class observations were also mentioned as a valuable practice, enabling teachers to exchange best practices and refine their approaches.

Teachers find virtual INSET sessions ineffective and misaligned with their needs

However, when asked about their INSET and teacher professional development experiences, respondents expressed the need for improvement and greater targeting. They shared that most recent INSET sessions were held virtually, a format they found ineffective. First, respondents reported a lack of equipment and stable internet connectivity, which made it difficult to access designated platforms

and navigate the assigned training modules. Second, many of the training sessions were tailored for Grades 1-4, even though some of the participants were teaching Grades 5 or 6. As a result, they were compelled to attend lower grade-level trainings simply to fulfill post-training output requirements. Lastly, although training needs assessments and proposal submissions are regularly conducted at the school level, respondents observed that these inputs are rarely reflected in the actual INSET programs delivered by the division.

Logistical and personal barriers hinder teachers' full participation in training

The teachers have also emphasized that while the content of current training programs is generally valuable, several logistical barriers prevent them from their full participation. These include scheduling conflicts, insufficient funding, and limited access to necessary equipment. For example, they noted that the recent virtual INSET format adopted by the NEAP was disengaging, especially for those without personal laptops or computers. Many admitted to being distracted during online sessions. One participant shared that the training coincided with a scheduled sports event, while another mentioned needing to care for her children during the session. These accounts highlight a clear preference for in-person training programs. Teachers overwhelmingly reported that the most effective sessions they had attended were conducted face-to-face, allowing them to devote their full attention and energy to the experience.

Teachers prefer in-person, out-of-town trainings that are relevant and well-facilitated

Beyond the delivery mode, respondents have also valued the expertise of the resource speaker, the training location, and the relevance of the topic to their professional or personal development. The majority of the respondents expressed a preference for in-person training sessions conducted out of town. They shared that the combination of travel and leisure elements served as a motivational factor. A change in environment and routine made the experience more engaging and meaningful. Moreover, respondents emphasized the importance of aligning training content with identified needs and proposals, and of ensuring that competent resource speakers are engaged to effectively meet the objectives of the program.

A.3.2 Key findings from Visayas Private School

Teacher involvement in decision-making and external training

Their Basic Education Department has established a Principal Council that plays a central role in curriculum development, instructional planning, and classroom management. As the principal explained, “We have nine members, [each] responsible for two subject areas. During evaluations, these members suggest the necessary [teacher] training and areas for improvement.” The school has also adapted its own version of the INSET program, implemented through a three-phase model: (1) onboarding and reorientation with Human Resources, (2) monthly departmental exchanges on teaching methodologies, and (3) monthly cascading sessions for INSET updates. At the institutional level, a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) is conducted and regularly submitted by the department.

One persistent challenge in teacher development is limited access to INSET, particularly in private schools due to financial constraints. As the principal noted, “DepEd [does] not [currently] offer INSET for private schools, only for public schools. Although they claim a complementary partnership with us, [we still] hope they extend these programs to private institutions, as many schools cannot afford teacher training, especially when travel is required.”

To address this, they implement a Teacher Learning Community (TLC) model, in which selected teachers attend external seminars and subsequently disseminate their learnings to colleagues. “We send our [teachers] who will ‘echo’ what they learn to their [co-teachers], just to make professional development more accessible.” The department also rotates training opportunities among faculty members to ensure equitable participation.

Although internal training is beneficial, its limitations are acknowledged. “We strive to give an INSET training program to all our faculty in basic education,” the principal emphasized. While the Private Education Assistance Committee (PEAC) offers partial support, it remains insufficient when trainings

require travel expenses. Despite the principal's preference for online training, teachers voiced a contrasting view: "The training should be in person because if it's virtual, we [might] multitask [with household work]. [Learning] hands-on is better, the lectures are shorter, and the best teaching experiences [like] making exams and mock assessments are useful in the classroom."

Due to high costs, the school limits the number of teachers it sends to in-person trainings. "It is too costly to be sending many teachers [to attend the] program," the principal explained. Interestingly, many teachers identified publishing companies as the primary sponsors of professional development opportunities they have attended.

Training in classroom and student management

Teachers reported an urgent need for updated classroom management strategies that align with students' evolving behavior and increased dependency on technology and parental support. One teacher remarked, "Students nowadays are different from before. We have to [establish] a new classroom management [style] as they are attached to their parents, [relying] on them over [us] teachers. They also focus on using gadgets for learning." As a result, many educators find it challenging to foster student independence and maintain discipline.

Technology and AI integration

Teachers have also raised concerns about the increasing reliance on artificial intelligence in student learning. "Most of our students [are using AI], if not all of them." Educators observed that students often use AI to complete assignments and essays, prompting discussions on ethical use and classroom strategies. While some teachers are beginning to integrate AI into their lessons, others remain unsure of how to respond to this technological shift. One participant remarked, "I agree with the use of AI, but we need to learn more about modern techniques of teaching [and] activities that are more interactive since students get easily bored."

The group strongly emphasized the need for training on AI literacy, ethical considerations, and classroom application. "We need training on how to use AI in the classroom...one of the teachers here [already] uses AI in his classroom," a participant added. In addition to AI-related concerns, teachers expressed difficulties in navigating digital learning tools and online platforms. They recommended workshops on blended learning strategies, educational technologies, and digital student engagement techniques.

Specialized training for extracurricular roles

Several participants shared experiences of being assigned to extracurricular roles, such as journalism, coaching, or performing arts, without formal preparation. One teacher recounted, "[I am a] science teacher, but before high school, in senior high until college I was a journalist. So, when I was hired as a teacher, [they] appointed [me] as a faculty advisor and a moderator [for SPUD's] campus journalism club." Teachers expressed the need for adaptability in taking on roles beyond their subject expertise.

While these responsibilities offer avenues for professional growth, many felt unprepared and had to rely on trial and error. One teacher noted being assigned to train students for singing competitions despite lacking formal training in music instruction. The group advocated for structured coaching and mentorship programs to help teachers guide students effectively in extracurricular settings.

Additionally, teachers reported being reassigned to teach outside their subject specialization without sufficient preparation. "I'm actually a secondary education teacher, [but] right now I am assigned as a grade school teacher. I [had] to really adjust to everything. Yes, it was challenging, but I was [eventually] able to cope," one participant shared. To address this, they proposed the implementation of cross-disciplinary training to enhance flexibility and competence.

Training for work-life balance and stress management

The discussion also revealed widespread concerns about work-life balance, especially among teachers pursuing graduate studies while working full-time. "As a young professional, there should be a

separation between work and life. I'm also studying in graduate school, [so when] work piles up, if we [are not able] to manage [these], stress will affect us," one participant shared.

Teachers cited increased workloads and personal responsibilities as major contributors to stress and burnout. To support teacher well-being, they called for training programs on stress and time management, as well as self-care strategies. "Stress management training is needed; for us teachers, we wear multiple hats [or] roles, and these overlap with [piling] deadlines," another teacher emphasized. The inclusion of emotional intelligence training in professional development was also recommended to help teachers manage interpersonal relationships effectively.

Training in student support and parental engagement

Finally, teachers expressed the need for training in supporting students with mental health concerns or special learning needs. "Some students are not clinically diagnosed [with] disabilities, and as a teacher we [are able to recognize these]. But we are not really ready [or] trained on how to deal with these kinds of students, [especially that] some parents [are also] in denial of the situation," one participant explained. While educators recognize the importance of individualized student support, many feel ill-equipped to respond effectively.

Parental involvement was another critical issue raised. "Some parents [are not as] involved [as others] in their child(ren)'s education. [Without] student motivation and parental engagement, all the responsibilities are left to us teachers," a participant observed. Teachers recommended training on effective parent-teacher communication, conflict resolution, and strategies to foster collaborative partnerships. They also emphasized the importance of workshops on setting healthy boundaries and managing expectations to ensure a supportive learning environment.

A.3.3. Key findings from Mindanao Private School

Emotional and physical toll of TDP

The majority of the respondents interviewed in the study emphasized how professional development programs come with significant emotional and physical strain. Many teachers expressed concerns about the intensity of training sessions, as well as time constraints and the challenge of balancing professional development with their personal well-being. The demand for continuous learning among teachers often leads to mental fatigue and burnout, especially during summer breaks. Additionally, some of the participants noted that information overload during training sessions makes it difficult to absorb and apply new knowledge effectively. As one respondent puts it, "we need time to process everything. Sometimes, it's just too much at once." Another respondent thinks that "there's so much information packed into each session that by the time [they] go back to teaching, [they're] not sure how to apply everything."

The need for more engaging and practical training approaches

The teachers have also expressed their strong desire for more interactive, hands-on, and engaging professional development sessions. While they find INSET and TPD programs valuable to their career, many educators find these trainings overly lecture-based, making it difficult for them to stay engaged and apply new strategies effectively inside the classroom. There was a clear preference for workshops, classroom simulations, and real-world application exercise among the respondents over traditional and passive learning methods. They also suggested that trainings should be tailored to their specific needs rather than following a generic, one-size-fits-all approach. To put it in simplest terms according to one respondent, "[teachers] need workshops, not just lectures. More action, less talk."

The need for more support in managing student behavior

Unlike the other private school respondents in this study, teachers highlighted behavior management and student mental health as critical areas where they need more training and institutional support. Many of them struggle with handling student behavioral issues, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, as students exhibit a mix of heightened emotional, social, and disciplinary challenges. Moreover, most of the respondents feel ill-equipped to address students' mental health concerns, yet

they are often expected to manage these issues without the proper, specialized training. They believe that this can be resolved through the deployment of psychological support systems, as well as the adoption of clearer protocols for handling behavioral and emotional difficulties inside the classroom.

Appendix 4. KII findings

A.4.1. Key findings from government representatives

Current offerings and implementation plans

During the KII, representatives outlined the current INSET and TPD programs offered by DepEd. All offerings are designed around professional competency standards to ensure quality, relevance, and alignment with teacher career progression. Professional development in DepEd follows a tiered structure. At the national level, they deliver programs such as the three-year Induction Program for Beginning Teachers, aimed at bridging the gap between pre-service training and classroom realities. Subject content courses, informed by the Teacher Development Needs Study (TDNS), aim to address priority learning gaps, while Master Classes, modeled on the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) framework, are delivered by subject matter experts through nationwide online sessions. These programs allow for broad participation across regions. At the local level, divisions may implement their own INSET programs, while LACs serve as school-based collaborative learning mechanisms. During the National Learning Recovery Program, they focused its support on division-led INSET initiatives over LACs, in light of ongoing recovery efforts. They are also responsible for capacitating the workforce in preparation for the nationwide implementation of major curriculum reforms such as the MATATAG curriculum.

Challenges in accessing INSET and TPD programs

The respondents identified several barriers to program accessibility, which may be categorized as organizational, capacity-related, or systemic.

First, they continue to navigate its internal process challenges that impede their program delivery. Fragmented operations and overlapping mandates across units result in inefficiencies, such as duplicated efforts and extended processing times. Internal decision-making and rigid operational guidelines further reduce agility and responsiveness. There is a recognized need to streamline these procedures and simplify quality assurance systems. For example, the process for accrediting Master Classes with the PRC could be optimized by focusing on template fidelity, given that content is developed by qualified experts.

Second, although there are reporting systems in place, there are challenges in utilizing available data to inform the development and budgeting of TPD programs. On one hand, they require stronger data analysis capacity to translate findings into programmatic improvements. On the other hand, it was noted that resources have, in some instances, been allocated to programs without clear evidence of impact, limiting the efficiency of investment in professional development.

The respondent also reports that the varying degrees of independence among DepEd offices have led to parallel programs that lack coordination. The absence of a centralized resource-sharing mechanism prevents divisions and regions from building on each other's initiatives, leading to duplication of efforts and underutilized outputs. Institutional collaboration remains a challenge, particularly in scaling effective practices across regions. The reduction of scheduled INSET periods from two to one per SY has also constrained opportunities for professional learning. This limits the number of sessions that can be conducted, reduces teacher exposure to new content, and compresses the time available for reflective practice.

While literacy and numeracy are well-covered in current offerings, they acknowledge that other subject areas, particularly non-core disciplines, have remain underserved. This results in uneven access to relevant content across subject specializations.

Planned improvements in INSET and TPD implementation

During the interview, respondent has shared their plans to improve its systems and ensure a more responsive, efficient, and equitable delivery of professional development programs:

1. *Integration of workflows and systematic national planning.* To improve operational coherence, they propose consolidating relevant divisions under a unified office responsible for the end-to-end process of program design, implementation, and monitoring. This would minimize fragmentation and allow a more seamless workflow. The enhanced monitoring and evaluation system will support evidence-based decision-making and guide funding allocations toward high-impact programs.
2. *Early announcement of offerings to improve school-level planning.* To increase participation and reduce scheduling conflicts, they aim to announce INSET offerings from the Central, Regional, and Division Offices well ahead of time. Early notice will allow schools to prepare and integrate INSET schedules into their academic calendars. Additionally, they plan to standardize CPD accreditation across programs to provide professional incentives for teachers.
3. *Promotion of inter-office collaboration and resource sharing.* They encourage SDOs and ROs to collaborate by pooling materials and best practices into a centralized repository. This would prevent the duplication of efforts and promote scalable models across regions. Adopting or adapting effective outputs from other divisions will allow units to avoid starting from scratch, conserving time and resources.
4. *Strengthening financial support for INSET delivery.* They advocate for sustained and increased funding for INSET programs, particularly through the School Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) budget. Increased MOOE funding enables school heads to allocate resources for teacher incentives and logistical support needed for effective training implementation.
5. *Expanding program offerings aligned with professional standards.* There is a plan to align all offerings with the PPST. Future iterations of the Induction Program may be condensed to one year, contingent upon stronger alignment between teacher education institutions and DepEd expectations. Master Classes will be developed for each PPST domain across all four career stages and will be designed as stackable, CPD-earning modules that support teacher promotion. It is also planned to make Master Classes a regular offering that can be integrated into school-based initiatives. Additionally, new content will be developed to respond to both national policy shifts and emerging needs from the field. In-school innovations, such as mentoring by Master Teachers and demonstration of specific pedagogical strategies, will be integrated into these efforts, emphasizing contextual relevance and peer-based learning.

A.4.2. Key findings from a partner organization supporting education in Mindanao

Engaging diverse categories of teachers

In BARMM, the educational landscape is markedly distinct. One of the key informants explained that there is an important recognition of the diversity among teachers in the area. This includes not only licensed teachers but also other individuals who serve as de facto educators in underserved communities. She elaborated that “in the Bangsamoro, the context is different. There is recognition that various types of teachers exist, not only those who are licensed. To deliver educational services and respond to barangays without schools, one must utilize whatever resources are available.” This perspective underscores the necessity of building education systems that are inclusive of all possible teaching resources, especially in areas lacking formal school infrastructure.

Assessing teachers' professional needs and monitoring teaching practices

The interview also highlighted the efforts to systematically assess teachers' knowledge and monitor classroom practices, particularly within the K-3 stages. A resource person noted that their work with the Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education (MBHTE) in Bangsamoro included the use of pre- and post-tests to evaluate training outcomes, alongside the development of monitoring tools tailored for school-level implementation. She explained that “at the K-3 stage, we have demonstrated methods for assessing knowledge levels in relation to training. We implemented pre- and post-tests and developed monitoring tools to identify teaching practices that should be observed at the school level, as outcomes of the teacher training programs.” The key informant also referenced recent developments from a workshop in Zamboanga that focused on tools and guidelines for a comprehensive TPNA for

K–12. She emphasized collaboration with institutions such as the Mindanao State University (MSU) system, including campuses in Maguindanao, Marawi, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi. This coordination, she noted, facilitated stronger ties between MSU and the MBHTE. Another key informant added that although campuses outside the Bangsamoro Region, such as MSU-General Santos, are not directly involved, other institutions like MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology contribute expertise as centers of excellence. He believes that “MSU brings in the various competencies across its campuses to support the Ministry [of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education] in developing tools and guidelines for assessing teachers’ needs across key stages. These tools have been aligned with the PPST, contextualized for the region, and also mapped onto the current MATATAG curriculum.”

Utilizing various TPD modalities

The interviewees also addressed the range of modalities used in TPD, highlighting that it should go beyond traditional forms such as INSET. A key informant emphasized the importance of experiential and peer-based learning by noting that “teacher professional development is not limited to formal training or INSET. Even facilitating learning exchanges, where teachers observe others engaging in best practices, constitutes meaningful TPD. Teachers [can] learn significantly from each other.” She further critiqued the traditional top-down approaches in training design and delivery. As such, she suggested that the “Department of Education needs to rethink how trainings are conducted. Education supervisors may be content experts, but they do not have a monopoly on knowledge. What matters more is how these practices work in the classroom. Teachers often follow policy memos—what some refer to as democracy—regardless of whether these practices are effective in their specific contexts. Their performance evaluations are often tied to compliance, which can lead to pretense rather than genuine learning.” She also stressed that the ongoing needs assessment initiative is shifting this approach, focusing on teacher support rather than punitive evaluation.

Co-production of interventions

A recurring theme during the KII session was the importance of co-designing educational interventions with local stakeholders. A key informant emphasized that ownership is central to sustainable implementation, particularly during political and institutional transitions: “We usually co-design our interventions with the Ministry. In transitional contexts, it can be easy to impose ready-made solutions, but those rarely sustain. Instead, we strive to co-analyze, co-design, and even co-implement initiatives. From the outset, this ensures shared ownership; not just in teacher professional development, but across all projects we introduce.” Another informant reinforced this approach, highlighting the value of teacher agency: “One of the main goals of the tools we’re developing is to amplify teacher voice. Rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all approach to professional development, we aim to reflect the varying needs and capacities of teachers, schools, and divisions. We want to empower teachers to articulate their own needs, rather than having them defined exclusively by higher-level administrators.”

Recognizing the need for structural support alongside TPD

While TPD is critical, the informants stressed that effective professional development must be accompanied by systemic support structures. One of them pointed out gaps in assessment systems for early-grade learning by noting that “at the K–3 level, we lack comprehensive, systems-based assessment tools to monitor student performance. We often rely on National Achievement Test (NAT) results to realize that students have not acquired foundational skills that should have been mastered in the early grades.” She further discussed the material constraints faced by teachers: “When teachers return to their classrooms after training, they often do not have even the most basic materials to implement what they learned. How can a teacher teach reading effectively if there are no books? And when textbooks are available, they are often outdated.” The same key informant also critiqued current policy gaps in community engagement: “While DepEd policies promote home and community involvement, implementation tends to focus on mobilizing communities for logistical support, like during Brigada Eskwela. However, there is little emphasis on how these partnerships can support student learning. That is an area where policy could be strengthened.”

A.4.2. Key findings from school leaders from a private school based in NCR

INSET content should be needs-based, aligned with teachers' professional needs and values.

INSET and TPD opportunities for teachers in private schools are largely influenced by their needs. They start their training design by conducting a series of data-gathering procedures in the form of surveys and FGDs, as exhibited by one of the key informants in the study. The school leaders also refer to news and trends to ensure that their teachers are equipped with relevant training. For example, during the pandemic (2020-2022) they covered seminars on mental health and learning poverty, based on research of the school leaders at the time.

Aside from the usual technical and pedagogical skills that INSET and TPD programs provide (e.g., numeracy and literacy), training content also focus on strengthening teaching values by emphasizing virtues, motivation, and the teacher's role in shaping students' lives. Specifically, the respondents suggested that training should be both cognitive and affective, to have a lasting impact on teachers. They recognize that professional growth is not solely about competency acquisition but also about instilling a sense of purpose and commitment. They express that the most impactful training sessions are those that align technical skills with deeper personal and professional values.

A.4.3. Key findings from school leaders of a private school based in Region 4

External partners such as publishing companies facilitate INSET or provide relevant resources for TPD

Collaboration between schools and external partners is essential to planning for INSET and TPD. Some educational institutions partner with private organizations, including publishing companies, to design and deliver teacher training programs. However, these collaborations often lack customization, offering generic content that may not fully address school-specific challenges. Despite this, the key informants acknowledge the value of external engagement, particularly when experts introduce new teaching methodologies or provide insights into evolving educational trends. Engagement with public schools has also been explored as a means of resource-sharing among schools, as exhibited by one key informant. Private institutions sometimes seek inclusion in government-organized seminars in the hope of participating at a minimal cost rather than bearing the full financial burden of the training.

Private schools work on a limited budget for INSET and TPD

Despite their willingness to address the teacher's training needs using a needs-based approach, resource constraints often hinder their full implementation. They echoed that it is challenging for private school teachers to secure INSET and TPD opportunities, unlike in public schools who have resources allocated for such. They shared that while they have flexibility in organizing their own TPDs, they are often misguided and discouraged when the school owners fail to see the value of TPD. According to them, *"the mindset of most school owners in private institutions is that it's difficult for them to invest because they know that the teachers would eventually go out of the private school system maybe after two years or three years".*

While the Manual for Private Schools stipulates that a significant portion of the budget should be allocated to teacher salaries and professional development, on-ground realities tell a different story. Small private schools find it challenging to invest heavily in training when teacher turnover rates are high. School administrators do not see the rewards of funding these professional development opportunities, knowing that their teachers may leave for better opportunities in the public school system after a few years.

Implementation of INSET and TPD programs needs to be monitored to ensure that all teachers from both public and private schools are provided with equal opportunities.

Bureaucratic inefficiencies were also identified as barriers to efficient implementation of INSET and TPD. While schools submit reports on training activities, there is little follow-up to ensure that professional development translates into tangible improvements in classroom instruction.

There is a need for stronger monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. One respondent proposed that “evaluations should guide funding decisions. If a program is ineffective, why continue it?” This suggests that professional development should be more data-driven, with decisions based on measurable outcomes rather than tradition or convenience. Many educators also argue for increased government support, particularly for private schools struggling with budget limitations. As echoed in the interviews “there should be a policy requiring all schools, public and private, to invest in teacher development” “The schools are not required to conduct in-service training. DepEd doesn't monitor us if we do it or not. The closest thing that we report that we are conducting in-service training is during our submission of the private school profile every October or November. We just tell that we conducted this one on these following topics. How many teachers are included in the training but other than that, there is no monitoring and accountability. Private schools are often left on their own.”

Another respondent suggested a national repository of training resources, stating, that “not all schools have the luxury to organize extensive training, so having a centralized system would help.” These suggestions highlight the need for systemic reforms to ensure equitable access to high-quality professional development.

INSET and TPD programs should be tailored to teacher needs at different experience levels.

Current programs are usually focused on content relevance, and delivery is the same for all teachers from all levels. As echoed by the respondents, the design and delivery of INSET and TPD programs is often one-size-fits-all. They advised on designing INSET and TPD tailored to the needs of teachers at different experience levels, and to provide more support for beginning teachers. Respondents suggested that varying needs of teachers at different experience levels be considered when designing training programs.

A significant component of INSET and TPD in the school system is their emphasis on equity and accessibility. Schools strive to provide opportunities to all teachers, particularly through school-based training programs that cater to diverse teaching clusters. Some schools ensure that teachers from all grade levels participate by organizing PLCs, where educators collectively decide on themes for their development sessions. This bottom-up approach fosters collaboration within the school, allowing teachers to share experiences and best practices with their fellow colleagues. Another major gap lies in the lack of assessment tools to accurately identify student learning deficiencies, which in turn affects the design of teacher training programs. The lack of reliable data on student performance gaps in literacy and numeracy can fail professional development initiatives to target the most urgent instructional challenges that schools are facing.

A.4.4. Key findings from administrators from a DepEd Regional Office based in Mindanao

DepEd regional offices offer localized teacher training beyond central programs

Aside from cascading training programs from central office and NEAP, regional offices also provide training programs for teachers based on the identified needs in their respective regions. One example of this is the lack of assessors in the region. When the regional office identified a high number of qualified students under National Certificate II (NCII) program who needed assessment to obtain National Certificate I (NCI) for technical-vocational-livelihood (TVL) programs, they immediately coordinated with TESDA to provide training for teachers to become assessors. Additionally, the regional office consults and coordinates with the schools division office to conduct training to selected teachers in the division, while the division is responsible for selecting the teachers to be trained. Another example is the training for teachers to teach reading, data gathered by the region showed that secondary teachers are not prepared to teach and to remediate reading because it is not part of their preservice training or in any undergrad courses. This becomes a problem because reading is important across different subjects for comprehension, according to the key informant. This type of training was injected in the school's LAC. Additionally, one of the main focuses of Region X is providing trainings for content mastery, development, and delivery. Based on the findings of the region, there is still a need to capacitate teachers on the content since most of them teach multigrade level especially in far-flung areas. However, one problem with this is the learning materials for teachers. Some of the training

programs coming from DepEd such as K-12 and MATATAG curriculum did not go with training materials and learning modules and textbooks for teachers. While regional office provide supplementary materials, these are not enough as trainings should be anchored with official textbooks from DepEd.

DepEd regional offices lack personnel for teacher training oversight

While regional offices provide localized training programs from the teachers in the region, the burden comes with the limited personnel handling the implementation and monitoring. In Region X, under the Curriculum and Learning Management Division, there are only 11 supervisors that handle a lot of programs for the whole region. For instance, one supervisor is handling training for kindergarten that also handles early language literacy and numeracy. But because these three programs are closely related to each other and fall on K-Stage 1, more assistance should be given to provide trainings for kindergarten teachers to improve their teaching focusing on preparatory learning and reading. One supervisor may not be enough in these areas as there are a lot of concerns and monitoring issues should be addressed deliberately.

Budget constraints limits teacher access to INSET and TPD programs

Regional training programs for teachers are intended and ensured that everyone will participate but due to limited fund resources, the regional office cannot bring all the teachers in. In Region X for instance, there are at least 3,000 schools, these high number also gives a higher number of teachers to be trained. The regional office does not have enough funding to provide training to all these teachers all together. To address this issue, implementation of the LAC is reinforced so that teachers will be able to address their needs immediately. The regional office also utilizes LAC to provide training to specific schools with higher funding so that they will be the ones to pass on the training in the division level to train other schools. In a region of 3000 schools, budget is tight especially if schools are very far, utilizing the division level of training is important to reach those that the regional office cannot, according to the key informant. In terms of number of participants in the training, a tight budget also limits the maximum potential of the training programs to be delivered effectively. For instance, a training program should be limited to 200 participants with at least 10 facilitators as mentioned by the key informant based on experience. This class size makes the monitoring and delivery of the program more effective because facilitators can monitor smaller groups, but due to limited funding, training programs only include 4-5 facilitators sometimes, only just the speaker. An example of this is the MATATAG curriculum training. While the regional office conducted the quality assurance for the training content, the delivery itself was harder to monitor because the participants was over 500 teachers with only one resource speaker, the key informant mentioned that in 500 teachers, most of them uses their cellphones because they feel bored, some older teachers get easily bored as well because they cannot participate enough even during the breakout sessions because there are still a lot of participants in smaller groups. Processing individual outputs is also time consuming for the resource speaker and provides immediate feedback because of a lot of submissions.

Hurdles in CPD accreditation discourage teacher participation

To motivate teachers to participate in training programs, Region X identified only 2 incentives that they can provide: (1) service credit and (2) CPD units. While service credits are counted for promotion of teachers, CPD units are only useful for the renewal of license. However, regional office struggles to provide training programs with CPD units because the process of accreditation from the PRC became more complicated and can take longer time to process. According to the key informant, the process now takes more than a month before the approval of CPD units because the process now involves the approval of NEAP. Due to meticulous requirements from CO and NEAP for quality assurance, regional offices are advised to process training programs at least 3 months prior to implementation. For quality assurance purposes, the key informant said that they do not have problems with that, the problem only lies when situation arises and training needs to be implemented right away, so the regional office has no choice but to continue without CPD units and they only need to file for certificate of participation since CPD units are not counted for promotion. In regional level, certificate of participation and or recognition is more important than CPD units when it comes to promotion, so teachers are more likely to attend the trainings as well.

A.4.5. Key findings from representatives from a DepEd Schools Division Office in Mindanao

Access to TPD remains limited in remote and under-resourced areas

At the division level, ensuring equitable access to professional development remains a challenge, especially for teachers in remote areas who are facing geographical, infrastructural, and logistical barriers. While INSET is mandatory for all teachers across the country, participation in other programs is limited due to a combination of physical distance, lack of internet connectivity, and school operational constraints. Smaller schools struggle to release teachers for training, unlike larger schools with more staff. To address this, the division employs a “Training of Trainers” model, where trained teachers conduct localized rollouts in remote districts. However, maintaining the quality of these rollouts remains a concern.

Implementation and institutional issues hinder effective TPD delivery

Among the challenges the division is facing, much of the emphasis has been placed in its coordination with NEAP on teacher training programs, particularly due to inconsistencies in NEAP’s implementation of such. While division-led training must meet existing NEAP’s PD accreditation, national programs often lack CPD accreditation despite it being mandatory at the local level. NEAP also pre-selects participants using outdated data, causing logistical issues when identified teachers are no longer in service. Another issue that they have identified is the duplication of documentation requirements. Since both PRC and NEAP have their own quality assurance processes, training organizers must prepare separate sets of paperwork for each accreditation. This redundancy increases administrative workload, making the program implementation more cumbersome.