

# Voices from the Hinterlands: A Qualitative Exploration of the Challenges and Triumphs of Teachers Assigned in Remote Areas

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## Abstract:

Teaching is the practice implemented by a teacher aimed at transmitting skills to a learner, a student, or any other audience in the context of an educational institution. Educating is closely related to learning, the student's activity of appropriating this knowledge. Cultivating can be defined as engagement with learners to enable their understanding and application of knowledge, concepts and processes. It includes design, content selection, delivery, assessment and reflection. However, teachers assigned in remote schools experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, triumphs and insights give little attention. Hence, this qualitative phenomenological research study explored the voices from the hinterlands like Cabidanan Elementary School, Mambing Elementary School and Sta. Fe Elementary School. The purpose of this study was to explore on teachers' experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, triumphs and insights in teaching remote area. There were six purposively selected teachers from three different schools who are assigned in remote schools in New Corella District. Findings revealed that teachers assigned in remote areas experience difficulties in terms of transportation and providing learning materials to their students which have affected its effectiveness. The study come up with recommendations to support the learning materials and safety of teachers assigned in remote areas.

**Keywords:** hinterlands, experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, triumphs and insights, phenomenological study

## Introduction

Teachers stationed or assigned in rural or remote locations are known as hinterland teachers (Kuika Watat & Jonathan, 2020). According to Department of Education (DepEd) policy, newly hired teachers are often assigned to mountainous schools for three to five years before they are eligible to seek a transfer.

Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) assert that urban education has unique challenges. Consider how much more challenging it must be for educators working in rural areas, where resources for education are frequently scarce (Howard & Milner, 2021), where students come from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the classroom (Rude & Milner, 2021), and where there are obviously few opportunities for educators to advance their careers (Rahman et al., 2022; Parkhouse et al., 2019). This study highlights these challenges by looking into the actual experiences of the teachers at the rural school.

Development have occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa throughout the last ten years (2000-2010). According to Mulkeen and Chen (2008), the main obstacle to recruiting educators to remote places is the difference in living conditions between rural and urban areas. According to Quijada (2018), at the Philippines,

instructors at remote schools confront ongoing challenges in providing high-quality basic education in rural areas due to a lack of resources. Poverty is evident in the town, the school, and the kids. The school does not have the essential teaching and learning resources. Some students don't read at all, and many learn slowly. Some pupils walk every day to school from nearby barangays. Teachers spend a percentage of their pay on classroom resources in order to support learning. The majority of the instructors at Cabidianan Elementary School, New Corella, Davao del Norte, had obstacles and problems during their five years of employment, such as a lack of teaching resources. This school still lacks enough teaching resources, and its teachers continually battle to deliver fundamental education in an engaging manner. Instructional materials are aid of teachers in deliver classes to students. Based on the 2 participants' responses, it can be deducted that they felt there was a dearth of instructional materials and that they often innovated using the materials that would give the students a far more meaningful learning experience. The safety of teachers assigned in remote areas in their daily transportation going to school.

### **Contribution of this paper to the literature**

Numerous literacy works were examined and determined to be significant for the state of the field. In a similar vein, studies and additional references were crucial to improving comprehension of the teacher's selected subject. The experiences, difficulties, coping strategies, and insights surrounding teaching in remote locations were the main topics of the literature that was pertinent to this study.

Teachers are vital contributors, not only in the life of a student, but more so in society at large. They are therefore the community's assets as they act as living examples of morality, impart honor, cultivate morality, and defend the rights to each person's education Macdonald and Weller, 2017.

According to published research, teachers in rural areas typically face obstacles related to geography that prevent them from participating in various professional development workshops, training sessions, and seminars (Mangione & Cannella, 2021). Technology use is likewise restricted and nonexistent for some people in rural locations (Rhaman et al., 2022). Technology plays a critical role in classroom discussions and the teaching-learning process because it has the potential to dramatically change students into future members of the global competitive workforce (Malik, 2018). Children living in rural areas are also citizens, and they should have access to the same educational programs and practices as those in metropolitan areas, particularly when it comes to using technology and even understanding its advancement (Quintero & Williamson, 2021). Because of the unbalanced teacher-to-student ratio, Hinterland teachers are overburdened with duties and workloads (Yunarti et al., 2021). Teachers often become burned out and unhappy as a result of this (Zain, 2021).

Notwithstanding the various difficulties and issues that teachers in rural areas face, they also recognize the importance of teaching as a vocation that can change students' lives rather than as a profession (McCallum, 2020). Teachers in the Hinterland typically have a strong grasp of flexibility (Chaplin, 2023). They become acquainted with the type of classroom they will be overseeing. Teachers may undoubtedly alter the conduct of their students when they are successful in managing a multigrade classroom (Benigno & Franco, 2023). Teachers feel incredibly accomplished and content in their work if this is accomplished. Teachers in Hinterland are equally imaginative (Widyastuti et al., 2020). They must be able to deliver the lesson in the most imaginative and captivating way possible when including two or more grade levels in interaction (Smith et al., 2022). Teachers who live in the hinterland can also enjoy the abundance of nature, including the pleasant breeze provided by the large trees and the fresh air they wake up to (Khanapurkar,

2020). It's important to keep in mind that teaching is all about passion, therefore being a successful teacher is not all about the ups and downs in life and challenges at work (Fergusson, 2022).

The study by Quejada & Orale (2018) and the experiences of the instructors at Cawayan Elementary School are comparable. Most participating teachers, especially the female educators, prefer special vacations. They thought that compared to a single motor, people feel safer riding in a tricycle. Special journeys require a larger payment than the typical, everyday meals. Even so, they must taking their budget into account, they made special trips to refrain from being late to school. They clarified that essentially, the tricycles must wait for each other travelers.

The lack of electricity, potable water, and proper roads are just a few of the difficulties faced by teachers who work in distant locations. Additionally, they are unable to get real-time updates and communicate necessary data to concerned units, agencies, or persons in power due to a lack of communication infrastructure, such as cellphone signals, the internet, and transportation, let alone stay in touch with their loved ones (Peterson2020).

Teachers' ability to instruct Indigenous kids is being hampered by their ignorance of their personal qualities. Additionally, it was discovered that teachers' misguided notions of what it is like to live in the country, the harsh living circumstances, the physical and psychological isolation, and the lack of professional recognition all contribute to their tiredness while working with rural and Indigenous students. The results of this study may be valuable for further research as well as for universities, stakeholders in education, and those looking to enhance teacher preparation programs and teaching methods (Angela Baeza 2019).

According to Ronald Orale (2018), teachers in the Philippines' remote schools continue to encounter difficulties providing a basic education of high quality in the face of a lack of resources. Passionate and dedicated educators are crucial to providing much needed services in rural schools. This study aimed to document first-hand narratives from six isolated primary schools instructors in Samar's Southwest. Poverty is evident in the town, the school, and the kids. The school does not have the essential teaching and learning resources. Some students do not read at all and many learn slowly. The students' families are impoverished; some of them go to school without food and are unable to pay for the things they need for school. Teachers had to ride motorcycle and walk kilometers over occasionally treacherous barangay on foot to school. Teachers spend a percentage of their pay on classroom resources in order to support learning.

Considerable work has been accomplished by Total enrollment in the last ten years, primary 29 education has become more accessible in African countries in the area, and the rate (GER) increased, going 78% in 2000 to 91% in 2002. Still, enrolment has surged more quickly in compared to rural areas, and a growing percentage of African children outside of school are kids from rural areas.

Taylor and Mulhall, (2001). Rural youngsters might be thought to be harder to educate. They are probably less likely to get family support to attend school and more likely to have alternate obligations on their time, such assisting with farm chores. As they go to school, the curriculum might not be as applicable to their circumstances, and they might receive less assistance for their gaining knowledge from one's household.

Teachers' work may be of worse quality even when they are instructing countryside compared to their peers in cities, teachers frequently have less access to support services, and less chances to take advantage of in-service training. In certain instances, they also struggle with having access to resources and literature.

Furthermore, because the parents are typically less being educated, they are less inclined to keep an eye on the caliber of instruction or to act if the quality of instruction is low (Libreville, Gabon, 2006).

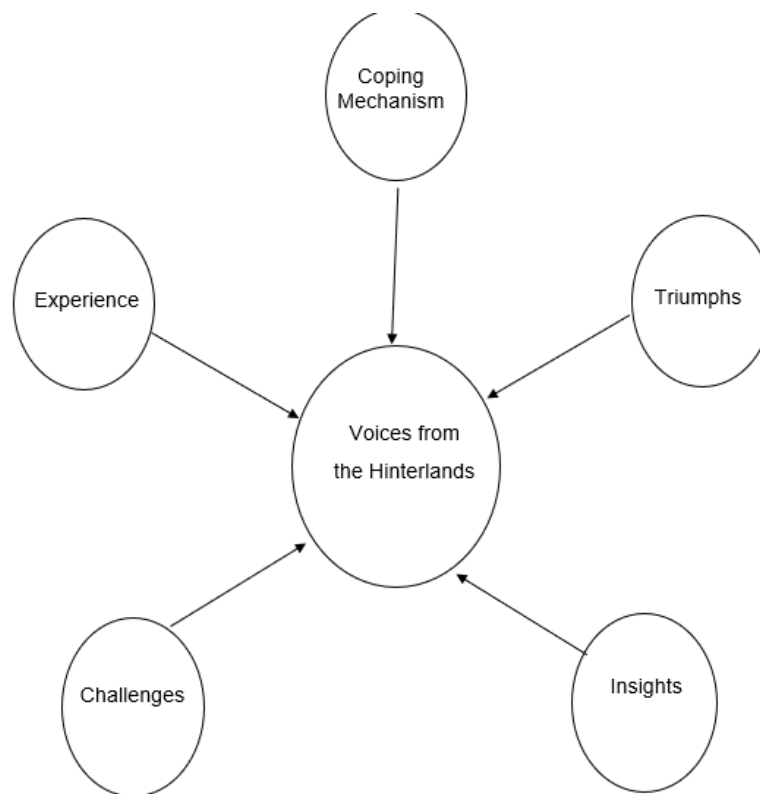
Then they started a large experiment to teach over 50 million children from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade using technology, with little to no time for planning or preparation. The problems very immediately became more numerous. Some students did not have access to computers or the internet. Teachers lacked any background in online education. Many parents were also unavailable to assist. In many areas, a large number of students simply did not log on, and administrators had no reliable method to determine why. The likelihood that millions of pupils would have significant gaps in their learning increased as soon as many districts stopped forcing students to perform any work at all.

Education law has been regarded to be the finest way to alter the world for the better. A variety of 23 problems, according to du Plessis and Mestry (2019), negatively impact the capacity of public schools in rural South Africa to offer a high-quality education. Rural areas are usually remote and underdeveloped. As a result, the majority of rural school are devoid of the physical resources and essential infrastructure needed for information and communication technologies, water purification, roads, transportation and electricity. According to Shah, Mahmood, and Shah (2015), effective administration is crucial in schools since they give education, which is necessary for the country's economic, social, and moral growth, bad management in the classroom will result in bad instruction. As a result, the nation will become backward. They said that the only means by which a nation may achieve its aspirations for fame and notoriety is via education. Principals and/or school heads deployed to remote places play a crucial role in this regard.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Teachers in the hinterlands are the driving forces behind changes in education, bringing harmony, advancement, and metamorphosis into the lives of students in the outlying regions. They are the unsung heroes who went unnoticed because everyone was too busy focusing on how students performed academically and how pedagogical interventions affected their ability to retain the material. This study uses the lived experiences of the living heroes assigned to the hinterland areas of the New Corella District as a lens through which to view the management plan.

Notwithstanding the various difficulties and issues that teachers in rural areas face, they also recognize the importance of teaching as a vocation that can change students' lives rather than as a profession (McCallum, 2020). Teachers in the Hinterland typically have a strong grasp of flexibility (Chaplin, 2023). They become acquainted with the type of classroom they will be overseeing. Teachers may undoubtedly alter the conduct of their students when they are successful in managing a multigrade classroom (Benigno & Franco, 2023). Teachers feel incredibly accomplished and content in their work if this is accomplished. Teachers in Hinterland are equally imaginative (Widyastuti et al., 2020). They must be able to deliver the lesson in the most imaginative and captivating way possible when including two or more grade levels in interaction (Smith et al., 2022). Teachers who live in the hinterland can also enjoy the abundance of nature, including the pleasant breeze provided by the large trees and the fresh air they wake up to (Khanapurkar, 2020). It's important to keep in mind that teaching is all about passion, therefore being a successful teacher is not all about the ups and downs in life and challenges at work (Fergusson, 2022).



### Research Questions

The research was geared to explore the experiences of teachers assigned in hinterlands areas of New Corella District, Division of Davao del Norte with the challenges, coping mechanisms, triumphs, and insights they have encountered as a teacher in hinterlands.

In particular, the following research questions were asked:

1. What are the experiences of the participants being assigned in the remote areas?
2. What are the challenges encountered by the participants assigned in remote areas?
3. What coping mechanisms did the participants utilize throughout the journey as a teacher in remote schools?
4. What are the triumphs of the participants as a teacher assigned in remote areas?
5. What are the insights of the participants regarding the unique experiences they have encountered?

### METHODOLOGY

The chapter explained the research design of the study and discussed the methods used to collect data to explore the experiences, challenges, insights, and coping mechanism in teaching remote areas.

The study was conducted in Cabidianan Elementary School, Maming Elementary School, and Sta. Fe Elementary School, these three schools are one of the public schools in the New Corella District, Division of Davao del Norte.

Given that the study used phenomenology, the researcher's primary responsibility was to investigate the experiences, difficulties, insights, and coping methods of the instructors with reference to the difficulties and victories they encounter. The seven steps of an interview inquiry report were used by the researcher. The participants of this research were selected through a non-probability type of sampling, specifically purposive sampling. The sample preference of this study was based on the personal judgment and



discretion of the researcher, based on one subgroup in which all the sample members are similar, particularly the teachers assigned in remote areas.

The target participants for the study were then chosen and informed by the researcher. Additionally, participants received a summary of the study and were informed that they were participated in an IDI (In-Depth Interview), a technique for obtaining data. It is important to remember that the conversation centered on individual viewpoints and experiences, hence there are no right or wrong answers (Dornyei, 2007). The study's aim, objectives, and methods were addressed for their knowledge and improved comprehension. The participants were be made aware that their participation was fully voluntary and would not affect their employment. Anytime throughout the interview, they are free to leave.

The study utilized a deductive approach to data analysis. The deductive approach (Haregu, 2009) to qualitative data analysis involves analyzing data based on a structure predetermined by the researcher. In this case, the research questions were used as a guide for analyzing your data.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings to the research questions that explored the challenges and triumphs of teachers assigned to remote areas. The research participants were selected from three different schools within the New Corella District having two participants each school the total number of participants was six which satisfy the number of samples for the in-depth interview.

### Experiences Teaching in Remote Area

This theme demonstrates the amazing work that instructors who are stationed in remote places put in. Teachers who are hired for the first time are often assigned to a school in the hinterland, but after working for three or more years, they are given the option to select which coastal schools they would want to be transferred to, provided the position is available. As a result, the majority of recently employed instructors are grappling with how to acclimate to and be accepted in their new surroundings while facing difficulties in the hinterlands.

**Happy Seeing Learners from Different Cultures** This theme constituted their experiences in going to school every day, communicating students with different languages. Informant 1 pointed out.

There is job satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment. Happy seeing kids of different cultures and enjoying their native language. Amazed of how far the station is located and felt stress while travelling along the bumpy roads.

Meanwhile, Informant 4 expressed her experience about teaching remote schools with different cultures, she said;

*Maskin layo happy gihapon.*

(Even how far the station is, still I am happy.)

**Unimaginable Exhaustion Felt.** This theme shows how teachers manage their time as committed ones in building young minds in remote schools. Informant 2 pointed out;

*Naka experience ko unsa ka kapoy ang adlaw ug unsa ang bation mahobsan ug gasolina sa dalan.* Waking up early and passing the road where dogs are *manggukod*.

(I have experienced tiredness, and one time while going to school I did not notice that I do not have gasoline in my motorcycle and waking up early and passing the road with dogs who will run fast after me.)

**Difficulty Going to School.** In this theme, they need to go to school before 7:30 am. Teachers need to travel everyday experiencing the bumpy and dusty roads just to teach the students, Informant 3 said;

I experienced crucial road in going to school, walking in a distance and faced heavy rains and dusty roads while going to school.

**Having Taught Less Fortunate Learners.** This theme shows that the teachers assigned in remote areas are not that totally pressure in terms of visitors. Informant 5 said;

I have experienced teaching students who are less fortunate and know how to deal with it.

**Exciting and Inspiring.** This theme shows that the teachers assigned in remote areas are inspired in teaching young minds. Informant 6 said.

My experience in teaching in remote areas has been both exciting and inspiring. It is fun because I am teaching the Dibabawon Tribe which is my Tribe, and it inspires me knowing that poverty never hinders them from going to school.

### **Disadvantages in Teaching in a Remote Area**

This theme demonstrates that teaching is unquestionably a vocation and cannot be adequately characterized as a profession. There are many obstacles to overcome, and occasionally you have to give up something for the sake of teaching.

**Waking Up Early.** This theme constituted their experiences in going to school every day, having time management as Informant 2 said;

Waking up that early.

The same goes for Informant 4 on how she addressed her experienced, she said;

*kinahanglan sayo mo mata aron dili ma late, usahay ang dalan lisod.*

(I need to wake up early so that I will not be late. Because sometimes the road is risky)

**No Access for Online Flat Form.** There are a lot of paper works to submit so we need to find ways to submit before the due date. Informant 3 narrated how she addressed the challenges.

No internet connection to easily communicate your family while at work.

Informant 6 added;

I think one of the disadvantages of teaching in remote area is the access of online flat forms. In our school we do not have internet. We all know that having an internet connection really helps students in the process of learning.

**Long Distance Travel.** Everyday travel to go to school to build young minds and to touch young hearts but it is hard for the teachers in terms of transportation going to the area. Informant 5 proudly stated how she coped with the challenges.

It is very far; you have to travel. The travel is hard, and far from materials that you want to buy and use during class discussion.

**Waking Up Early and Coming Home Late.** In every situation there is a balance, managing the time to wake up and sometimes going home late. There is always enough time in school than to their individual family. Informant 1 stated .

Waking up early just to arrive on time and late to come home.

### **Advantages in Teaching in a Remote Area**

The emphasis in teaching at the rural school is more on giving than on receiving. Accepting the challenge of teaching from the heart requires a fearless heart. Teaching with love entails teachers embracing the reality of providing the greatest and most meaningful learning experiences for their students in addition to

loving their work. This paves the path for the teachers' compassion and passion. It is hard to avoid achieving more job happiness, productivity, and performance when one teaches from the heart.

**Abundance of Consumable Goods.** This theme shows how generous the students, parents, and stakeholders in remote areas. Informant 1 proudly stated how lucky she is.

There are a lot of vegetables you can get in the schools as well the generosity of the students in offering such consumable goods.

**Passing on Road with Stray Dogs.** Teachers are also at risk in traveling going to school because of stray dogs. Informant 2 said.

Passing the road where dogs are *mang gukod*.

(Passing the road where dogs will run after you.)

**Smaller Population.** Teachers in remote areas are mostly happy because of the population of students in every grade level. With this teacher will be able to teach children easily. Informant 3 narrated.

Small population that you can handle every day and teaching small group only.

**Not Easily Monitored.** Every school will have visitors to monitor and check teachers and principals and also check the status of the school. According to informant 4, she said;

*Dili dali maadtoan og bisita tungod kay layo, hahaha* then *ang* population *sa* per Grade level *gamay ra compare sa centro nga mga* school.

(Remote areas are not easily to have visitors like monitoring, because we are far, and the populations of the students are lesser compared in the city.)

Informant 5 added;

*Layo ug bisita, mas relax kaysa sa mga* teachers in urban areas.

(We are far from the visitors unlike teachers assigned in the city.)

**Love the Culture and Behavior of Students.** As a teacher you need to learned and adopt the cultures and behaviors of your students. Informant 6 said;

One thing I love about teaching in remote areas is the culture and the behavior of the students itself where I considered those as an advantage.

### **Problems Encountered in Teaching in a Remote Area**

The majority of schools in the hinterland struggle with a shortage of instructors, classrooms, and educational supplies. It is quite difficult to give excellent guidance in this situation. However, educators in the hinterland will always find a way to improve things so that the various native and accessible resources may be used to their fullest potential. They struggle on submitting reports since their area do not have internet connections. The participant encounters also demonstrate these experiences.

**Internet Connection.** Internet connection is very important to teachers as Informant 1 said;

Lack of Internet connection that you cannot go with the trend.

Internet connection is very useful as we are now living in modernize world, and for informant 4 saying;

*In terms sa Internet problema kayo kay wala gyud ni sa school kong nay gusto e search dili dayon Makita, dili nimo ana ka dali mabuhat.*

(In terms of the Internet connection, that is a problem, if you want to search something you will not directly see it and do it)

**Road and the Distance.** Teaching in remote schools is not easy, because you need to travel every day, going to school and going home safe, Informant 2 said;



The road, the distance and of course *pag-abot sa school dili naka* fresh as you are expected *pag-abot sa school. Bation nakog kakapoy sa kalayoon pero* in my side *gyud akoa gyud huna-hunaon ang akong mga bata nga looy sila ug akoa gyud ning isipon tanan* their future depends on me.

(The road, the distance and of course when you arrive in school you do not need to expect to be fresh like what you are expecting. Feeling always tired but all of the challenges will be easy for us teachers because we always think the student's future depends on me.)

**Communication to Family.** Communication is the best way to have a good relationship with one another. Teachers who are assigned in remote areas struggle in terms of communicating with their families. Informant 3 said;

Communication to your family, heavy rains early in the morning

**Attitude of Students.** Every students have different attitude, they are diverse from each other based from family they are in. According to Informant 5, she stated;

Attitudes of students are different from students in urban areas, they are high tempered and hard to understand.

**Location of the School.** Teachers assigned in remote areas are having hard time because it is far from their individual residency. According to Informant 6, she said;

The challenging part in teaching in remote area is the location itself because the location of the school is quite far wherein you need to travel almost an hour and sometimes when heavy rains falls the road is dangerous because it is muddy and slithery

### Ways Used in Handling Transportation

This participant talked about how challenging it is to be a teacher in a school in the hinterland. The distance is one of your main concerns, so you should make sure you can get up early and get everything ready because occasionally it won't be possible to come. The cost of the transportation is quite high. This participant was also able to disclose that obligations at home are affected due to the planning and duration of vacation. In addition, traveling to school can be extremely risky, particularly during the rainy season when the roads are extremely slick.

**Being Fetched all the Time.** Travelling everyday back and forth is hassle, Informant 4 stated;  
*hatod og sundo kanunay.*

(Always fetched back and forth)

Transportation is the most challenging part as a teacher as Informant 6 said;

My transportation during my 6 months of travelling in school back and forth is through *sundo (fetched)* and commute. The hardest part is when my *sundo (fetched)* is not available I need to *pakyaw (paid double)* the rider which means that instead of paying 60 pesos you need to double sometimes triple it. Because of this situation I put a lot of effort into my driving practice to reduce costs and avoid hassles.

**Manage to Learn to Drive.** Learning how to drive is not easy but as a remote teacher she needs to practice Informant 1 added;

Manage to practice driving just to lessen the expenses and hassle of the *muhatod mo sundo (fetched)*.

Informant 5 shared her experience, she said;

I am able to learn driving motorcycle *para dili na mahasol ang banabels.*

(I am able to learn driving motorcycle so that my husband will be hassle free to fetch me)

**Travelling Using Motorcycle.** Transportation everyday cost a lot according to Informant 2, she said;

I travelled by a motorcycle, *gasolina bali daghan para dili mahubsan. Ubanan gyud og ampo before mo byahe para maabot sa school na safety.*

(I travelled by a motorcycle, I need to full tank my motorcycle, and pray always to have safe travel going to school.)

**Take Things to Heart.** Every situation needs to have heart all the time as Informant 3 said; Take it from your heart *nalang*, not really problem.

### Ways Used in Providing Learning Materials to Students

Overall idea that teachers ought to arrive at school one day ahead of their students and the various activities. It is critical that educators possess self-management skills and the ability to recognize areas in need of improvement. This theme, "Managing Self," demonstrates how teachers at the hinterland school organize all of their requirements to enhance the productivity of class discussion time. Taking a holistic approach to preparation entails managing oneself in the classroom. It should also include careful preparation and constant verification of the factors that need to be considered.

**Tell Parents to Provide Needed Materials.** Lack of learning materials makes the students behind in every activity made by the teacher, according to informant 1, she said;

I just tell their parents during orientation to provide their needed materials sometimes if *wala gyuy magamit ang bata hatagan na lang pero kanang walay makakita nga daghang bata or else papangayoon sa naa or pahulamom sa nay daghan nga gamit.*

(I just tell their parents during orientation to provide their needed materials sometimes if they do not have materials to use I will give materials secretly so that other children will not be jealous or else I will let them ask extra materials to their classmates.)

Moreover, informant 4 stated;

*Sultian ang parents about sa mga materials nga needed, pero naa man gyud dili maka provide so si teacher open arms to give and provide.*

(I will the parents about the needed materials, but still there are some parents who cannot provide so as a teacher I am open arms to provide.)

**Use Own Money.** Teachers assigned in remote areas are like santa clause, Informant 2 said;

*Ako lang personal nga kwarta makatabang man pud bisag ginagmay lang.*

(My personal money, I still extend my help in a little way.)

**Make Use of Anything Available in School.** The result shows that teachers assigned in remote areas are like use materials that are available in their areas like Informant 3 said;

*Ug unsay naa sa community og sa school kana lang ang akoang ginagamit, need to have your own laptop and printer in school and at home.*

(What are available in the community and in our school that is the only thing I use, I need to have own laptop and printer in school and at home.)

**From MOOE and Own Pocket.** Lone participant said it was her own money in providing materials, Informant 5 said;

Others are from MOOE and others are from own pocket *para maka-provide og materials nga suit sa ilaha.*

(Others are from MOOE and others from my own pocket so that I can provide materials suited for their needs.)

**Use of Textbooks and Modules from DepEd.** One of the reasons for the research participants become more productive and resourceful because of the love and scarcity of materials. Informant 6 stated;

I provided my students with materials by using textbooks and modules offered by DepEd, as well as by downloading educational videos and printing documents that the students needed in order to learn more.

### **Ways Used in Handling Problems Encountered**

This participant came to the conclusion that attending a school in the hinterland would be preferable. Even though the participant was accustomed to living in a city, this teacher was nevertheless joyful. In addition to the numerous visits, for which teachers must always prepare something, there are many more reasons to be pleased to be assigned to a school far from the division office. In contrast to the hinterland, where teachers can occasionally unwind and take in the sounds of nature, they are expected to pay attention while someone is evaluating their job as teachers.

**Preparation of Class Materials Done on Weekends.** Another reason stated by the participant was the difficult task in preparing class materials. This was echoed by informant 1;

I just make use of time during weekend to prepare needed videos or pictures during my class and remediation. For the materials that cannot be brought to school I just let them see through printed materials.

**Submit Everything to God through Prayer.** While some participants had reasons in every work they made, Informant 2 said;

By constant prayer, *makaya gyud ang tanan kong atong I submit tanan kabalaka sa Ginoo*. I can do all things though Christ who gives me strength Phil.4:13

(By constant prayer I can do everything and submit all worries to Jesus. I can do all things though Christ who gives me strength Phil.4:13)

**Loving the Work and Asking for God's Guidance.** Loving the profession that we have makes us happy no matter what are the challenges that were encountered in the field of teaching. Informant 3 added;

Do it by heart, love your work and always asked guidance to God.

**Do Online Works at Home.** Additional work was done at home to prepare for the class discussion. Informant 4 proudly said;

*Kay wala may internet sa school, so sa balay pa lang kun unsa ang need e download, e download na daan aron ma provide jud ang learning materials for the lesson.*

(Because we do not have internet in our school, I always download everything in my house so that I can provide learning materials for the lesson.)

**Think Positive Always.** Another perceived experience of the informant in teaching remote schools, she said;

Think positive always, also always think *nga* (that) you are a teacher, you are flexible, and you must know how to deal problems.

**Keep Lines of Communication Open.** Informant 13 stressed that the best thing to do in every situation is open communication, she said;

Handling problems is not easy but simple communication will help lessen or might solve the problem itself.

### Dealing with Students' Absenteeism

One cannot compromise the promise of providing high-quality education while working as a teacher in a rural school and having to take into account various factors. The instructor can share the best methods for providing high-quality instruction by being self-ready. When a teacher lacks self-management skills, kids often do poorly in the classroom and do poorly academically overall, especially when it comes to attendance.

**Knowing Reasons of Absences Incurred.** Teachers will always find ways to assist the students. Informant 2 stated;

Asking the main reason why he or she is absent, too poor to say but the main reason *nganong absent sila tungod kay walay bugas, dili sad sila maulaw mo suliyi* during *pag-check ug attendance sa ilang* reason. Sometimes, *pag naa pud koy koy akoa* extra rice or food *maka hatag sad ko ginagmay sa walay baon*. (Asking the main reason why he or she is absent, too poor to say but the main reason why they are always absent because they do not have food to eat, they are not ashamed to tell the reasons, while I am checking their attendance, sometimes, if I have extra rice or food I will give little piece of it to my students for those who do not have food.)

Similarly, informant 5 said;

*Mangutana lang gyud tapos encourage lang kanunay ang bata, din pangutan-on ang reason ngano sege og absent, tapos ako nga maestra niya mosabot sad ko.*

(I will ask the questions and encourage my students and know the main reasons why he or she is always absent and as a teacher I need to understand.

**Through Constant Encouragement.** The result showed that research participants found it that communication is the best way to win the heart of the student. Informant 1 said;

Constant encouragement and asking their reasons of being absent and trying to give moral support.

**Through Home Visitation.** . A lone research participant was more motivated in finding reasons like Informant 3 she said;

Home visitation m give ample time in dealing with them.

**Consultation with Parents and Home Visitation.** Another lone participant said that parents must know the importance of education she said;

One-on-one consultation of parents, and do home visitation.

**Through Home Visitation and Symposium.** Another reason of Informant 6 is to have proper guidance and appropriate meetings involved, she explained;

Absenteeism is the common problem in our school but we deal with it by conducting a home visitation and next month we will also be hosting a symposium entitled "Responsible Parenthood" to address the problem of absenteeism and also the drop-out.

### Ways Done to Provide Learning Materials to Students

In terms of the several aspects inside the classroom, life in the hinterland is less comfortable than life along the shore. The main issue in the hinterland area is a shortage of educational resources. Finding alternatives requires a lot of creativity on the part of a rural teacher. These are the various approaches for filling in the gaps inside the classroom. When it comes to the instructional resources, educators need to be adept at making the most of the assets at their disposal and contextualizing them. The idea of "alternative is life" should be paired with creativity and resourcefulness in the lives of teachers in the hinterlands.

**Use Own Money.** Another experience of the participant was providing the needs of her students, Informant 1 said;

*kuot sa balsa. Kay kulang man sa suporta sa ginikanan*

(Provide with my own money, because of the lack of parents support)

Informant 4 revealed;

In my own expense.

Likewise, Informant 2 revealed;

In my own expense. *Kay ang ilahang ginikanan wala sad income usahay. Ang uban wala gyud ga suporta.*

In like manner, informant 3 cited;

Kaugalingon nga kwarta nako hehehe.

(I use my own money.)

Informant 4 revealed;

*Sariling balsa.*

(My own expense.)

**From MOOE and Own Money.** Informant 5 share her experience about her expenses. She said;

Others from the MOOE, usahay akoo gyud. (Own money)

**Use of Textbooks and Loaded Videos.** Participants had her reasons in providing the needs of her students, Informant 6 said;

I provided my students with materials by using textbooks and downloaded videos.

### **Triumphs Attained in Building Quality Education**

You have to put in the work to improve yourself. The participant's viewpoint is reflected in this remark, which highlights the necessity of making the best decisions possible. Whether in the classroom or on a personal level, develop a strategy that takes into account the important decisions you will need to make in order to fulfill your life's ambitions. The greatest option for developing all of your skills—not just in imparting knowledge but also in attending to the needs of your students—while teaching is constant learning. Never stop learning since it will equip you with all the skills you need to be a successful teacher, particularly in rural areas.

**Seeing Students Make Progress in Reading.** A lone research participant was more motivated to teach specially reading and writing as Informant 1 said;

*kanang tudlo-an nimo ug basa unya Makita nimo nga nay progress ang bata ug naningkamot siya happy na gyud kayo ko.*

(When you teach them to read and you see the progress and the student are eager to learn that's makes me happy.)

Informant 2 added;

*lami sa feeling kong ang bata makabasa tungod nimo. Kapoy pud baya mag tudlo og basa pero masuklian raman pud ang kakapoy ug ma assess nimo ang bata nga nag improve siya ug kabalo na siya mo basa..*

(It is good to our feelings that our students know how to read because of us. It is hard to teach reading honestly, but at the end of the day it will be okay specially assessing the students that there is improvement and know how to read.)

In like manner, informant 4 cited;

*kanang Makita nako nga ang akoang bata naa jud nahibalo-an sa akoang pag tudlo, ilabi na jud sa basa*



(When I see my students that they learned from me especially reading.)

**Being Able to Help for their Education.** Teaching young minds and building strong foundation to our students is not easy. Informant 3 stated;

That I helped to educate them and able them to see the real world in the city to bring them what they cannot see in urban areas.

**Seeing Them Learning.** Teachers need to love their profession specially building young minds, Informant 5 said;

They are able to learn from you, from your way of teaching they are able to cope up.

**Provide Students Devices for Learning.** In teaching you need to find ways in helping the students, specially providing the needs they cannot provide, Informant 6 proudly said;

The triumphant moment I had recently in teaching students in remote area is providing them television in my own pocket which I think so much helpful to promote quality education. We all know that a student learns best especially when they are engage in technology.

### **Triumphant Moments Experienced in Remote Areas**

You will see that all of the sacrifices and challenges were worthwhile when you witness the learners' success. From Participant 3's point of view, it is crucial to understand how to influence students' conduct and how that action relates to actual situations that clarify the concepts. It is more than just a feat when a student gains reading and writing skills thanks to you; it is the fundamental aspect of your role as an educator.

**Students Learning how to Read.** Research participants considered herself as a living hero. She said; *Kanang tudloan ug basa unya Makita nimo nga nay progress ang bata ug naningkamot siya happy kayo sa pamati.* Also with *solving Makita lang nimo nga makabalo sila* beyond addition and subtraction *happy na gyud kayo ang maestra.*

(When you teach reading and you see the progress to that individual and it makes you happy. Also with solving problem and you see that they learned more than addition and subtraction it makes us happy as a teacher.)

Informant 2, stated;

*lami sa feeling kong ang bata makabasa tungod nimo. Kapoy pud baya. mag tudlo og basa pero masuklian raman pud ang kakapoy ug ma assess nimo ang bata nga nag improve siya ug kabalo na siya mo basa.*

(It is overwhelming that the child able to read because you strive hard to teach them, teaching reading is not easy but at the end it makes us happy that you assess them and know that they are able to read because of you.)

**School Made Safe for Students.** As a teacher we need to ensure the safety of our students, Informant 3 said;

The school safe and fulfill my duty as a teacher to them.

**Students Learning Something.** It is a happy emotions when you did something positive to your students knowing that they woke up early just to go to school, some of them are walking going to school and passing rivers every day. Informant 4 said;

*kanang nakita nako ang mga bata naa jud nahibaloan sa akong mga pagtudlo.*

(When you see the students learned the lesson I taught them.) **Students Consider Teachers as Second Parents.** We all know that 5 days we are with our students , we stand as second parent to them , we teach them in academic and of course good values. Informant 5 proudly said;

Students valued you, not just because you are a teacher but they consider you as their second parent. Having good character to anyone.

**Overcoming Fear.** As a teacher we need to conquer our fears, fighting for daily battle just to teach our students, Informant 6 stated;

When I was assigned to a remote area my proudest moment was when I learned how to ride motorcycle. One of my biggest wins in life was overcoming my fear of driving.

### **Best Experience Encountered as a teacher in remote areas**

Teaching in a rural location requires one to keep in mind the importance of pausing to think. A teacher can consider and evaluate life because they are already in a mountainous environment. Schools in the hinterland will always provide you with clean air, a quiet moment, and the opportunity to listen to your innermost thoughts. They will also teach you techniques that will help you overcome your weaknesses by leveraging your strengths. The pupils' interactions and development of positive relationships with one another with their teacher.

**Provide Most Cherished Christmas Gifts for the Students.** Sometimes, good memories together with our students is the most memorable one that they cannot forget. Informant 1 shared her experience, she said;

It was during my first Christmas celebration in the school year 2018 *nga bisag ulan kayo ug daot ang kayo dalan naningkamot ko og bitbit as well as sa safety sa duha ka box nga cake kay ingon Ang mga bata wala pa sila katilaw ug cake nga naay icing Makita nimo ang mata sa bata sa akua hidlaw sa pagtilaw sa lamian nga cake bisan barato ra ang cake, uban mi sa pag kaon tanan.*

(It was during my first Christmas celebration in the school year 2018, even if it was raining and the road are risky I still pursue to bring the cake gong to our school, I just make sure that the two boxes of cake was safe. I remember that my students said that they have not yet eaten a cake with full of icing, I can see to their eyes that they are excited to taste the cakes. It is not pricy but we eat it together.)

**Celebrate Birthday with Students.** Some people chose to celebrate the most special day of their lives with their family and friends but Informant 3 shared her experience she said;

*kadtong nag birthday ko sa school grabe na feel gyud nako to nga special kayo nga adlaw sa mga bata. For the first time gikantahan kog birthday song. Sauna mangud sa Private School ako man ang librihon tapos karon ako na ang mang libri tapos sabay mi og kaon tanan. Happy kayo sa feeling makita sila nga excited kayo mokaon.*

(When I celebrated my birthday at school I feel like that was so special day for my students. For the first time they sang a song for me. I tried to teach private school and they are the one who provide food for us, and now, I am the sponsor and let my student eat. We ate together and was a happy feelings seeing them excited to eat.

**The Opportunity to Educate Students.** Being a teacher you need to be bias, always see the fairness and equality of the students all the time. Informant 3 stated;

That I was able to educate them equally.

**Celebrate Students' Graduation.** Best teachers known to have rewards to his or her students who did best during the class discussion, Informant 4 uniquely treat her students because they are about to fulfill their grade 6 journey, she stated;

My first face to face graduation program School Year 2022-2023. Three days before the graduation *nag celebrate mi sa mga bata tungod lage kay mo graduate na sila og Grdae 6, simple celebration, nagpalit ko og juice, loafbread and cake enjoy kayo ang simple kayo nga pagkaon nga ilang gikaon.*

(My first face to face graduation program School Year 2022-2023. Three days before the graduation we celebrated the victory of success of my students for accomplishing the grade 6 journey , simple celebration I bought juice, loaf bread and cake and we enjoyed so much eating the food I bought for them.)

**Being Respected by Students.** Good teacher will always gain positive attitude from his or her students, treating students like her own children and students will love you more than you ever wanted, Informant 5 said;

You are being respected.

**Casually eating with them and motivating them.** Simple food eat buy simple people makes us happy and contented, providing advices and inspirational messages. Informant 6 stated;

The best experience I had in teaching remote area was after class when I cooked bananas for them and we all ate together while motivating them to finish school. This precious moment I had with them inspired me to teach boldly.

### **Insights about Life as a Teacher in Remote Areas**

Teaching in the hinterland school is more on what you can give rather than what you can receive. It takes brave heart to take the challenge to teach with a heart. Teaching with love means that the teachers are not just loving their career but also to embrace the reality of giving the best and meaningful learning experiences to the learners. This paved the way as how passionate and compassionate the teachers are. When one teaches from the heart, it is impossible not to attain work satisfaction, increased work performance and productivity. This can be manifested with the words of the participants as they share how much they love their real-life encounters in the hinterland school.

**Be Happy with your Work.** No matter hard the situation is, choose to be happy, no matter how challenge you are wear your smile, because our students will always get positive energy to us. Informant 4, proudly said;

*Dili nalang huna-hunaon ang kalayo, ang importante happy ka saimong trabaho og happy ka nga makatudlo sa ilaha.*

(I will not think how far I travel every day, the important is you are happy with your job and of course happy teaching the students.)

Informant 6, added;

Teaching in a distant place is difficult, but seeing all the happy faces of the children when you get at school early in the morning is priceless. To stay motivated, I remind myself that what I do is not for myself, but for the future of my pupils, and that by doing so, I can help them succeed in life.

**Enjoy and Be Amazed with Students' Eagerness.** Being a teacher, you need to enjoy your duty, because the more you love your job it will be easy to you. Informant 1 said;

*Tiis-tiis lang gyud bisag layo ang ingon nila nga bukid kay mag-enjoy ra gyud ka while mag klase ug ma amaze ka sa kakugi sa mga bata nga mas sayo pa diay sa imo mag mata tungod kay magbaktas pa sila ug muagi pag pila ka sapa apan pursigido gyud nga muadto ug skwelahan labi nag naa kay ikadalit sa ilaha bisan ginagmay.*

(Just enjoy the ride everyday even if how far the transportation is, because at the end you will be amazed to your students that they will wake up early to just to go to school by walking and crossing the rivers too

just to be present in class. You can see to them how eager they are to learn.)

**Do what You can Do Best.** In teaching remote students, you need to put you self to their shoe, with this, you value and appreciate their eagerness to learn and as a teacher who is dedicated to teach bring the best effort you can give. Informant 2 stated;

*Para sa akoo, og kanang lugara gihatag sa imoha, do your best, do what you can wherever you are. Regardless sa status still do your best as a teacher. Looy ang bata ug ikaw teacher magpadala sa imong gibati. Search more techniques or strategies, mga new trends para dili ma behind ang mga bata attend seminar, trainings aron kita pud mo grow ug ang mga learners as well.*

(For me, if you are destined to be assign in that school, do your best, do what you can wherever you are. Regardless the status still do your best as a teacher. How Pity your children if you will show them that you are not happy. Search more techniques or strategies, like new trends, attend seminars, trainings so that we teachers will grow and of cause the students.)

**Have the Heart to Educate Learners.** In educating the young minds build them with big heart, Informant 3 stated;

Love your role even if it is usual, have the heart to educate learners.

**Worry not About Distance.** It is not important the distance, the most important is you have job and you became the part of the life of the students in that area, you are building better foundation for them. Informant 5 said;

*Lisod pero kaya ra, mas lisod ma assign sa baba kay mag-adjust napod ka.*

(It is difficult, but still I can handle everything, because it is more difficult being assigned in the city, because you need to adjust.)

### **Enhancing Teachers Skills in Remote Areas**

These are the experiences that are influenced with the environment and the people around. Although, it is already indicated in the realm of life that there is a balance of ups and downs, it still overweighs when you are fortunate and blessed enough to have a wonderful community that will serve as your ally of your personal and professional growth and development, the strong faith or the workplace spirituality that can be observed in your station and lastly, the gift of nature that is readily available. Do not stop learning, ever day choose to learn and develop new things. These are strong elements that can provide a person.

**Attend Seminars and Trainings.** Being innovative teacher you need to learned new things and know the new trends to become more equipped and knowledgeable teacher, Informant 2 loudly said;

Attend seminars, trainings *aron kita pud mo* (for us to) grow *ug ang mga* (and also the) learners.

Informant 5, added;

Attend more trainings and apply.

Informant 6 clearly said;

Attending or hosting seminars and workshops helps teachers improve skills in teaching children in remote areas.

**Do Research on New Teaching Trends.** Never stop learning, strive and be open minded to welcome new learnings as a teacher, Informant 1 stated;

For me, *mag serach na lang gyud kag unsay bag-ong trend ug mangutana sa uban unsa ilang mga pamaagi sa pag tudlo.*

(For me, as a teacher do research for the latest trend and ask other teachers the new techniques in terms of teaching.)

Informant 4, said;

Research *lang unsay maayo nga pamaagi unya mangutana pud sa mga nay taas najud og experience.* (Do research for what is the best way and also by asking questions to those tenured already in the field of teaching.)

**Be Innovative.** As a teacher you not to discriminate the students treat them nicely, Informant 3 said; Be Innovative in teaching, apply teaching pedagogy equally because learner in the remote area are also qualified for the quality education.

### Recommendations for DepEd Authorities

Every journey comes with a learning experience that we can take to better our ways and perspective in the next life journey. Through the help of people who have access in providing quality education and knowledge to teacher through seminars and workshops.

**More Learning Materials.** As a teacher assigned in remote area, you need to provide materials just to help building quality education to your students, Informant 6 said;

Provide enough learning materials.

Informant 6, clearly added;

I will give to the DepED authorities that might help teachers and students in remote areas are their continued support to provide essentials items and equipment that help in the teaching process.

**For DepEd to Reach out to Remote Areas.** This theme shows they need to experience the extra unique life of teachers who are teaching in remote areas. Informant directly said;

Encourage the DepEd to reach out the schools in remote areas or let them experienced and live maybe 2 to 3 days in the field for them to realize the needs of the students as well as teachers and maybe help in educating the parents and community as well.

**Teachers to Focus more on Teaching.** This theme tell how loaded the teachers are, Informant 2 said; To DepEd personnel, *okay gyud tong ang mga teachers more teaching gyud dili kay ang teacher ma busy cge og himo report nga halos mabiyaan na ang mga bata sa ka busy. Nindot kung ang mga teachers equipped gyud, mo attend og seminars and trainings para sa bata at sa bayan hehe.*

(To DepED personnel it is okay that the teachers will purely into teaching, because some teacher are focused more on extra paper works. It is good that the teachers are equipped and also by attending seminars for the children and for the country.)

**Higher Compensation and Hazzard Fees.** Every teacher assigned in remote school area asking extra allowances to support the daily needs, Informant 3 said;

Higher compensation, Hazzard fees hehe.

**Offer More Trainings and Seminars.** This theme explained that teachers are open for trainings in order to grow and develop more skills to provide quality education to compete globally, Informant 4 proudly said;

More trainings and Seminars.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the voices from the hinterlands as the focus of the investigation, the understanding of the experiences, the challenges encountered, mechanisms utilize in coping with the challenges, triumphs being assigned in the area and insights of the experiences could reinforce the means of knowing the voices of the hinterlands assigned in remote schools.



The experiences of teachers stated in this research would help the school leaders and other teachers to know what the experiences are encountered in the field of teaching in remote areas. Also, the challenges encountered by the teachers make us aware of what are difficulty they have experienced in teaching remote schools. How they cope with the challenges brought us ideas on how to become a fighter from own fear. Then, the triumphs experience in teaching students from different cultures and tribe, making big progress to the life of students. Finally, their insights are indeed invaluable for wherein equal education for all would be realized.

Teachers in the hinterlands painted a realistic view of the world, showing that attending a distant school need not always be a sign of doom because there are many worthwhile experiences that hinterland schools can give. This study demonstrated how Bandura's self-efficacy is reflected in the real-world experiences of rural teachers, as their capacity to take charge of the things that impact their lives' quality is influenced by their talents. Additionally, it identifies how one's motivation level—as suggested by Maslow's theory—one's capacity for experiencing stress and depression, one's resilience in the face of various challenges, and one's ability to make wise decisions—as outlined in the constructionist epistemology—all have an impact on how hinterland teachers manage to survive in the classroom.

This study suggests triangulating the investigation so that a researcher-made instrument may be developed to evaluate the work performance, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and satisfaction level of the instructors employed in the hinterland school. The tool should confirm that the Hazard Pay implementation needs to be reviewed and that the legislation protecting newly hired teachers working in rural or hinterland schools needs to be monitored. It is also possible to start more research on the experiences of the local teachers. This study also suggests designing an evaluation study to gauge and rank the quality of work life of teachers in the hinterland. The evaluation study may be a cross-sectional investigation that allows the parents' and students' perspectives on the teachers' job performance to be heard. These suggestions are beneficial in offering the finest path for the instructors in the hinterlands to advance both professionally and personally.

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