

A wide-angle photograph of a suspension bridge spanning a river. Three people are walking across the bridge. The background shows a lush green landscape with palm trees and a small building on the left. The sky is clear and blue.

On the Frontlines: The Perspective and Experience of Rural Teachers in the Philippines

Who we are + 4 insights gained from experience

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TEACH FOR THE PHILIPPINES

OUR MODEL



FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Short-Term Goal:

Self-managing and dynamic *new teachers* who are selected for their leadership potential. Fellows diversify and revitalize the public school classroom and the field of public school instruction.

1



PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER PATHWAY

Mid-Term Goal:

Tenured leaders already *within* the public school system who facilitate inquiry-based classrooms and sustain broader quality reform. Same access to individualized training and coaching as Fellows.

2



AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Long-term Goal:

Capacity building at the institution level. Former public school teachers and community leaders who continue on to work in national and local government. Rebuilding trust in public institutions.

3



In Barangay Sangabon, San Isidro, Leyte, Teachers and students walk miles to reach the school

1 RESPECTING TEACHER WORKLOAD

Perspectives from the frontlines of rural public education in the Philippines

Teachers in rural areas work *doubly* hard to carry out their role due to infrastructure challenges, societal beliefs, and resource scarcity. In many rural households the value of education is low. A rural teacher has to help students not only appreciate the opportunities education affords, but must also motivate families to support their child in finishing school.

- a. There is a scarcity of mobile and internet access. Teachers in the rural areas have a hard time accessing online learning resources either for their teaching or for professional development.
- b. Sometimes teachers end up buying students their learning materials, like notebooks and pencils.
- c. In pre- and post-pandemic times, teachers in the rural schools who have access to F2F training have to spend for transport fare to get to training venues, this can be prohibitive.
- d. Some rural schools are used as training grounds for new teachers. This makes it difficult to keep teachers motivated.

Providing direct scholarships/financial support to students in rural areas can help keep them in school.

1

RESPECTING TEACHER WORKLOAD

Sensitivity to their workload goes a long way.



In Sitio Pacol, Kabankalan, Negros Occidental, Teachers walk for kilometers to conduct home visitations to make sure they reach parents and students even in the most remote locations.

ENABLING TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

Perspectives from the frontlines of rural public education in the Philippines



In Barangay Pacol, Kabankalan, Negros Occidental, a Teach for the Philippines teacher conducts storytelling for a struggling reader, under the organization's Functional Literacy Program.

Enabling Teachers and school leaders to bridge challenges in rural schools is vital. This means investing in both the environment within which they are expected to teach and in training.

- Rural schools have smaller budgets. Resource support is ideal if directly channelled to the schools versus centrally from government agencies
- Classrooms in rural schools are not as maintained as in urban areas. Parents in rural areas do not always have the capacity to contribute for repairs or maintenance of classrooms.
- Rural schools spend for the delivery and transport of supplies/materials to their school.
- Rural communities are more vulnerable to calamities resulting in greater loss of resources, time, and opportunities.

Training is not necessarily in pedagogy or methodology - teachers/school leaders need to build professional skills outside of teaching. For example, training in resource management since teachers/school heads often fundraise privately for community needs.

2

ENABLING TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

Improving the learning environment



In Sitio Tapian and Sitio Pacol, Kabankalan, Negros Occidental, Teach for the Philippines' teachers do live storytelling for students of their Functional Literacy Program.

3 ENABLING PARENTS

Perspectives from the frontlines of rural public education in the Philippines



In Sitio Tinigban, San Isidro, Leyte, workshops for parents are conducted on a small stage near the basketball court. Parents do not have household resources for distance learning.

Generational poverty needs to be addressed. Familial perspectives on education influence children.

- a. Many students copy their parents' livelihood and stop schooling when they have gained very basic reading and numeracy skills.
- b. Some parents enroll their children to school to be able to avail of the 4 Ps (social assistance from the government) since School Heads needs to sign these prior to release of funds
- c. Often, secondary and tertiary schools are located in the city, thus, most elementary graduates would opt to stay in the area and would no longer continue higher education to due to transportation or lodging costs

Education is cyclical. Most parents in rural areas are barely elementary graduates or have never been to school. It is enough for some that their children are able to help in income generation so that they can eat, *"Okay na basta nakakapaghanap buhay na."*

3 ENABLING PARENTS

Parents are key partners in education.



In Barangay Pacol, Kabankalan, Negros Occidental, Teach for the Philippines' teachers train parents in storytelling and basic teaching methodologies. Due to the lack of mobile/internet access, during COVID, parents and learners benefited from home training from dedicated teachers who went above and beyond to prevent learning loss.

4

HELP FROM BEYOND THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Perspectives from the frontlines of rural public education in the Philippines



In Sitio Tinigban, San Isidro, Leyte, elementary students have to return modules to school themselves since their parents are out fishing.

Students have to walk for two kilometers to reach the school. If the roads are impassable due to heavy rains, others students have to ride a boat just to reach school.

OUTSIDE INVESTMENT IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS.

- a. Physical infrastructure like public roads need to be developed in rural areas. Modes of transportation are limited (tricycle, habal etc.) and most roads are very challenging during rainy days.
- b. Communication infrastructure is needed. Information dissemination is challenging given the lack of infrastructure in place. Word of mouth remains as the top source of information within rural school community.
- c. Most families do not have gadgets since since there is no mobile/internet signal in the area or this is not their priority for living expenses. And even in areas where there is limited service, when policies misalign, teachers will incur out of pocket expenses to provide pocket wifi devices to their students.

Prioritizing education requires a whole-of-government approach. The Department of Education needs alignment across various agencies to successfully raise the quality of education in rural Philippines. It cannot be done alone.

4 HELP FROM BEYOND THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Making education a national priority



Families in Sitio Tinigban in San Isidro, Leyte doing “pagkikitang” - preparing the bait used for fishing.

Fishing is the main source of income for the whole community and the whole family is involved. Kids as young as 9-years-old help their parents .

Usually, pagkikitang takes a lot of time and they do it for the whole afternoon.

✓ FINAL POLICY AND RESEARCH NOTES

Parting notes



In remote Sitio Liaunan, Caob Island, Siargao, there's no school in the community. A parent, Nanay Jeneveb, takes it upon herself to teach the children how to read.

1. In the Philippines, DepEd is currently implementing the [school-based management](#) approach which empowers School Heads to directly design, develop and implement measures to improve education outcomes. *It might be good to revisit that policy and analyze how variations in context such as urban vs. rural informs resource allocation and capacity-building strategies in achieving learning and school community goals.*
1. Apart from understanding contextual differences between urban and rural school communities, *further hyper-local research into socio economic status of people in rural communities may paint a clearer picture and provide more nuanced insights* about the realities facing teachers and their students.
1. In 2019, the DepEd released [Order No. 59 s. 2019](#), also known as the policy "Prioritizing the Development of Last Mile Schools in Sy 2020-2021: Reaching Out and Closing the Gap." *Perhaps learnings and key insights from the implementation of this policy can shed light on how synergies of key actors within and outside the DepEd result in improved access and quality of last mile schools.*

You can't transform
what you don't
understand



Appendix



Analysis Notes:

1. Data from this analysis deck were derived from the dataset used for the ADb Knowledge Product that explored teacher quality across Bangladesh, Cambodia, and the Philippines. The manuscript can be accessed [here](#).
2. The dataset has been updated to include variable on geographical classification (Urban/Rural).
3. Schools and teachers surveyed from Bangladesh were all from urban areas, hence limiting the geographical cuts to Cambodia and Philippines.



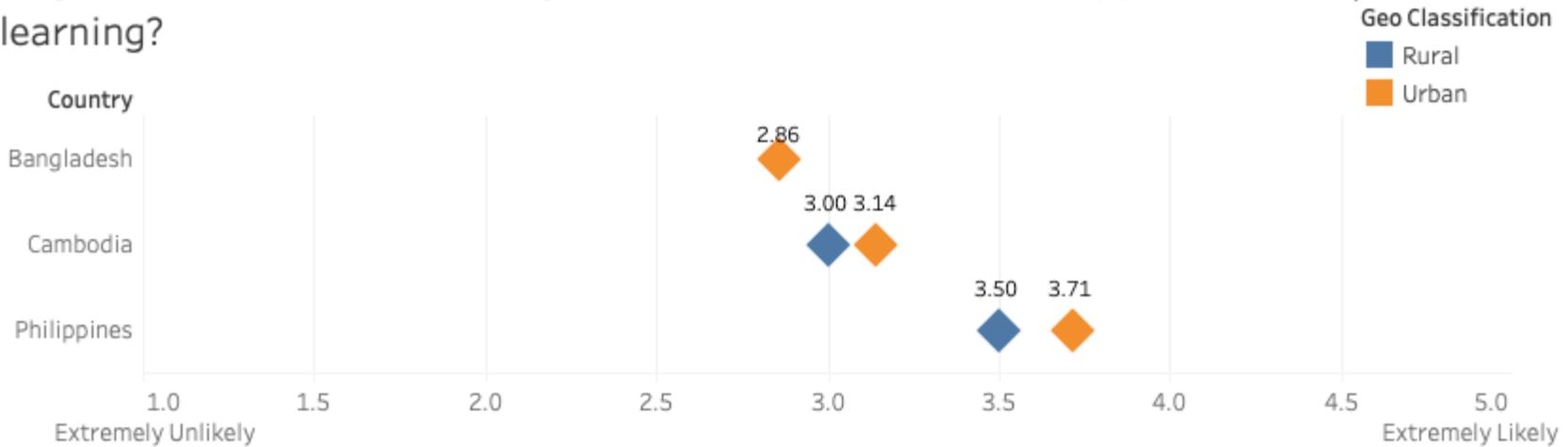
Teacher Contexts and Perceptions

Data were lifted from the Rapid Assessment Teaching Survey which was rolled out on October 2020. A total of 360 teachers participated: Bangladesh (181); Cambodia (91); Philippines (88).

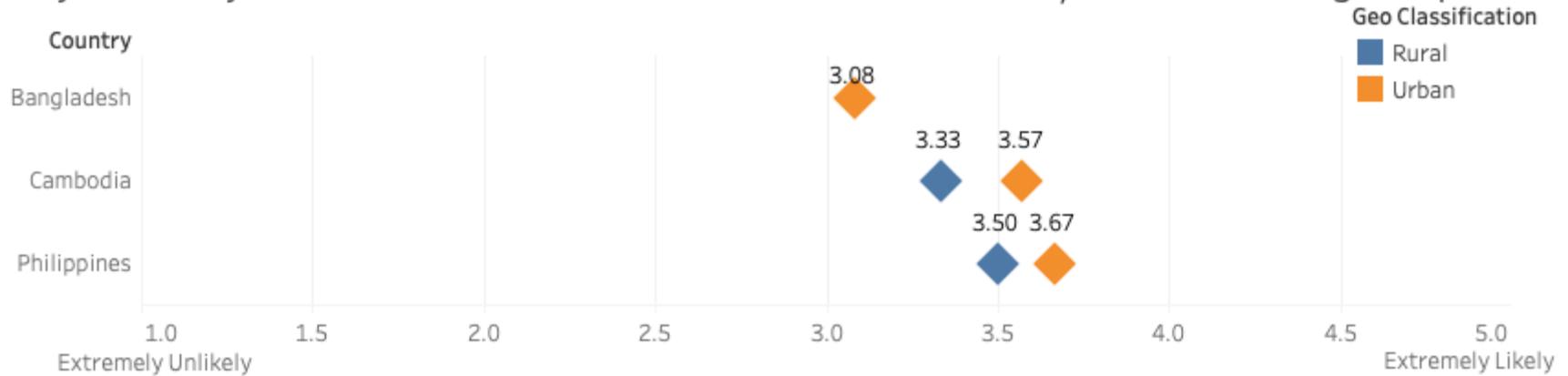
Access the full manuscript [here](#).



Do you believe that parents of your students will be able to support distance/remote learning?



Do you think your students will continue to learn in a distance/remote learning setup?



What is your means to access the internet?



APPENDIX



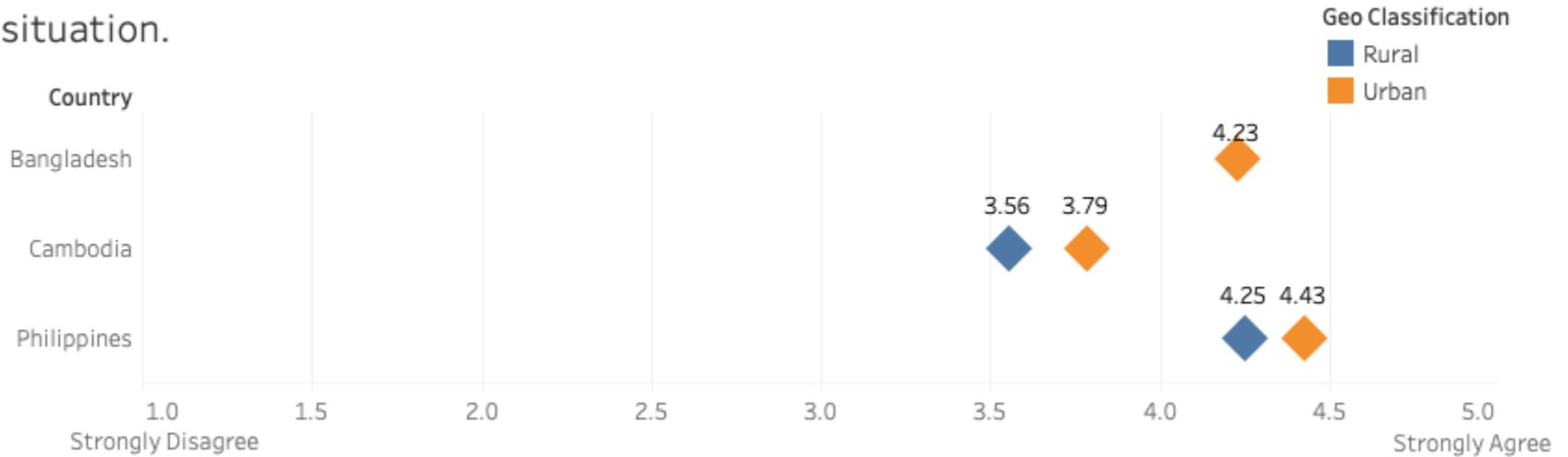
Teachers in rural communities mostly relied on prepaid data in connecting to the internet, while those that are in urban communities have been subscribing to a more reliable lined connection.

Wifi Access

Prepaid Data

Postpaid Data

As a teacher, I have the skills necessary to be effective in the current pandemic situation.



APPENDIX



As a teacher, I have developed new skills that I have not learned before to adapt to the current pandemic situation.

