

Inclusive Lifelong Learning in the Philippines: A Systematic Review of Ra 12028 (ARAL Program)

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100500295>

Received: 01 May 2026; Accepted: 06 May 2026; Published: 29 May 2026

ABSTRACT

This systematic review examines the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program established under Republic Act No. 12028 as the Philippines' flagship response to severe post-pandemic learning losses in foundational literacy and numeracy. Guided by sociocultural and social constructivist perspectives, the review interrogates ARAL's theoretical foundations, formulation rationale, implementation strategies, monitoring mechanisms, and contextual influences across geographic, socio-economic, and governance settings. A PRISMA-ScR-informed search of 2019–2026 peer-reviewed and grey literature, Department of Education (DepEd) issuances, and EDCOM II reports identified studies and policy documents on ARAL's school-level tracking tools, hybrid delivery models, and adaptive leadership practices.

Findings indicate that the ARAL Program has begun to translate policy commitments into observable improvements in reported learning outcomes, particularly in the early grades. DepEd monitoring data suggest that the use of diagnostic tools such as the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment, Rapid Mathematics Assessment, and Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, in combination with real-time dashboard systems, has been associated with more targeted interventions and increased literacy and numeracy proficiency in participating schools. Hybrid delivery models that combine face-to-face small-group tutorials with modular and digital approaches have coincided with higher learner engagement, attendance, and retention in several documented implementations, while the deployment of trained tutors and school readiness audits has strengthened local implementation capacity. Evidence also suggests that adaptive and distributed leadership practices have enhanced ARAL's responsiveness and contextualization across diverse school settings.

At the same time, the review highlights persistent challenges, including digital inequities, uneven access for marginalized learners, variability in tutor preparation, and weaker reported outcomes at higher grade levels. Monitoring systems, although effective in some divisions, face operational limitations in rural areas and rarely capture longer-term or higher-order learning outcomes. Overall, ARAL demonstrates promising early impact as a national learning recovery initiative but requires sustained investment, strengthened implementation capacity, and more comprehensive and independent evaluation to support equitable and durable learning recovery over time.

Keywords: RA 12028, ARAL Policy, Inclusive Lifelong Learning

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Philippine education system is currently grappling with a severe crisis in foundational learning. Results from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA 2022) revealed that 80% of Filipino students fell below minimum proficiency levels in literacy and numeracy, affecting more than 6.7 million learners in the K–10 levels (EDCOM II, 2024). This learning poverty, compounded by the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, has deepened inequities in rural and marginalized schools, threatening the country's long-term human capital development and the broader goal of inclusive lifelong learning.

In response to these challenges, Republic Act No. 12028 was enacted in 2024 to institutionalize the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program as a national learning recovery intervention. ARAL is designed to provide free, hybrid remedial tutorials in reading and mathematics through school-based recovery plans, learner progress tracking, and inclusive delivery strategies (DepEd Order No. 018, s. 2025). The program is conceptually grounded in distributed leadership theory (Spillane, 2006) and sociocultural learning principles (Vygotsky, 1978), emphasizing collaborative, adaptive, and context sensitive approaches to instruction. Its mechanisms include needs-based planning, hybrid delivery models, differentiated instruction, and monitoring through digital dashboards and division level evaluation tools (Fullan, 2020).

RA 12028 and the ARAL Program reflect the government's intent to bridge legislative commitments and classroom realities. Guided in part by EDCOM II's evidence based recommendations, policymakers frame ARAL not merely as a remedial measure but as a strategic investment in equitable human development and educational resilience (Office of the President, 2024). Rooted in constitutional mandates for accessible and quality education (1987 Philippine Constitution, Art. XIV) and aligned with global post pandemic recovery frameworks, the policy embodies a preventive remediation approach to avert lifelong socioeconomic disparities associated with low foundational skills (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020).

However, emerging literature and early implementation reports suggest substantial variation in resource allocation, fidelity of delivery, and scalability across regions and school types (Slavin, 2021). These patterns underscore the need for a scoping review and policy analysis to consolidate existing evidence on RA 12028 and the ARAL Program, examining their provisions, strategies, and early outcomes. Such synthesis is essential to refine policy design, strengthen implementation, and support the realization of inclusive lifelong learning as a lived reality for all Filipino learners.

Specifically, this systematic review sought to:

1. Identify the formulation, implementation strategies, and monitoring mechanisms of the ARAL Program, including school-level tracking tools, hybrid delivery models, and adaptive leadership practices for inclusive lifelong learning.
2. Examine the provisions of RA 12028 and assess how they align with the principles of inclusive lifelong learning within the Philippine education system.
3. Analyze the implementation of the ARAL Policy under DepEd by identifying successes, challenges, and gaps in translating legislative intent into educational realities.

METHODS

This scoping review and policy analysis adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA ScR) to enhance methodological rigor and transparency (Page et al., 2021). A comprehensive search strategy targeted peer-reviewed articles, grey literature, and policy documents published between 2019 and 2026 across databases including Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, and PhilJOL, as well as DepEd and government repositories from 2019-2026 using Boolean keywords such as "ARAL Program," "RA 12028," "inclusive lifelong learning," "DepEd implementation," "sociocultural theory," and "social constructivism" combined with Philippine education filters. Search strategies employed iterative snowballing from reference lists of key DepEd orders (e.g., DO 018 s. 2025) and forward citation tracking via tools like Publish or Perish, supplemented by hand-searching DepEd regional sites and EDCOM II reports for localized evidence.

All records were exported, and duplicates were removed. Titles and abstracts were first screened to exclude records that were clearly irrelevant. Full texts were then retrieved for documents that appeared to meet the inclusion criteria or where eligibility was unclear. Two reviewers independently screened full texts and resolved disagreements through discussion. Data were charted using a standardized extraction form that captured bibliographic details, document type, program focus (ARAL or earlier remediation program), target learners, implementation features (e.g., tools, modalities, personnel), outcome measures, and key findings. A narrative

synthesis was then conducted, organizing the evidence around four domains: (a) formulation of RA 12028 and the ARAL Program, (b) implementation strategies and monitoring mechanisms, (c) alignment with inclusive lifelong learning principles, and (d) reported successes, challenges, and gaps in implementation. The study selection process is summarized in a PRISMA-style flow diagram, indicating the number of records identified, screened, excluded (with reasons), and included.

Credibility of included sources was appraised using criteria adapted from established critical appraisal tools for mixed-evidence and policy-focused reviews (Page et al., 2021). For empirical studies, clarity of aims, appropriateness of study design, adequacy of sampling procedures, transparency and validity of outcome measures, completeness of reporting, and consistency between data and conclusions were considered. For government and DepEd reports, transparency of data sources, explicitness of monitoring and evaluation methods, clarity of indicators, and alignment between reported findings and policy recommendations were assessed (DepEd, 2025a, 2025b). Official policy documents such as RA 12028 and DepEd Orders were appraised in terms of clarity of provisions, internal coherence, and correspondence with stated learning recovery and equity objectives.

Theoretical Foundation of Ra 12028

Distributed Leadership Theory

RA 12028 is grounded in the principles of distributed leadership theory, which emphasizes the collective responsibility of multiple actors in driving educational change (Spillane, 2006). Rather than concentrating authority in a single leader, distributed leadership recognizes that effective school improvement emerges from the shared expertise of administrators, teachers, and community stakeholders. Within ARAL, this theory manifests in the collaborative design of recovery plans, the mobilization of learning action cells (LACs), and the integration of school-level monitoring tools. These mechanisms ensure that leadership is not hierarchical but participatory, enabling adaptive responses to diverse learner needs across varied contexts.

Moreover, distributed leadership provides a framework for sustaining inclusive lifelong learning by fostering accountability and innovation at multiple levels of the education system. By empowering teachers to act as instructional leaders and encouraging schools to co-create strategies with local communities, RA 12028 operationalizes leadership as a dynamic, context-sensitive process. This collective approach enhances resilience in addressing learning poverty, ensuring that policy intent is translated into classroom realities through shared responsibility and continuous adaptation.

Sociocultural Learning Principles

Complementing distributed leadership, RA 12028 draws heavily on sociocultural learning principles articulated by Vygotsky (1978). These principles highlight the centrality of social interaction, cultural context, and scaffolding in the learning process. The ARAL Program's hybrid tutorials and differentiated instruction embody this perspective by situating learning within collaborative environments where teachers, peers, and digital tools serve as mediators of knowledge. Through guided practice and contextualized support, learners are enabled to progress from their current developmental levels toward higher competencies, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Sociocultural learning principles also reinforce ARAL's inclusivity mandate by recognizing that learning is shaped by the cultural and social realities of learners. By integrating community-based practices, addressing rural connectivity challenges, and leveraging localized instructional strategies, RA 12028 ensures that remediation is not a one-size-fits-all solution but a culturally responsive intervention. This theoretical foundation positions ARAL as more than a remedial program—it becomes a scaffold for lifelong learning, where learners are supported through meaningful social interactions and adaptive educational structures that honor their diverse contexts.

RESULTS OF THE SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Formulation of RA 12028

Republic Act No. 12028, enacted on October 16, 2024, emerged from the urgent recommendations of the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II, 2024), which documented severe post-pandemic learning losses affecting 6.7 million K–10 learners. These findings were reinforced by PISA 2022 results, showing that 80% of Filipino students fell below minimum proficiency in reading, mathematics, and science (DepEd, 2025a). Consolidating Senate Bill No. 1604 and House Bill No. 8210, the Act was propelled by legislative urgency and data from the Learner Information System (LIS), which revealed enrollment declines and widening competency gaps across urban and rural schools (Lawphil, 2024).

The Act's formulation reflects constitutional mandates for accessible education (1987 Philippine Constitution, Art. XIV) and global post-COVID frameworks (UNESCO, 2021), but was crystallized by EDCOM II's evidence-based call to avert human capital erosion through preventive remediation. Policymakers framed the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program as a learner-centered intervention, prioritizing systematic tutorials, hybrid delivery, and holistic support to ensure equitable foundational skills. This marked a shift from fragmented responses toward a structured national policy, with dedicated funding for K–10 recovery, school returnee campaigns, and integration with nutrition and mental health initiatives. By positioning ARAL as both a remedial and preventive measure, RA 12028 was designed to safeguard lifelong learning trajectories and mitigate the long-term economic costs of learning poverty (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020).

Implementation Strategies

School-Level Tracking Tools

The ARAL Program employs diagnostic and formative assessments—including the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA), Rapid Mathematics Assessment (RMA), and Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI)—to identify at-risk learners within the first month of implementation (Angara, 2025). Individual Progress Trackers, attendance logs, and Learner Cards feed into the centralized ARAL Dashboard, enabling real-time monitoring and adaptive interventions (Gatchalian, 2025). Regional case studies, such as Cubay South Elementary, demonstrate the efficacy of these tools in ensuring tutor fidelity and refining instructional strategies, with reported proficiency gains of 25–35% in monitored cohorts (Dela Cruz, 2026). Hybrid paper-digital formats address connectivity gaps, while profiling mechanisms ensure equity for vulnerable groups, including 4Ps beneficiaries and SPED learners (Sampang, 2025).

Hybrid Delivery Models

ARAL integrates face-to-face small-group remediation with digital modular options, including LMS-based resources, printed guides, and video tutorials, tailored for areas with limited connectivity (Angara, 2025). Pilot programs in NCR and Regions IV and XI demonstrated increased attendance and retention, with hybrid models elevating engagement by 18–22% and sustaining 70% retention rates (Morales, 2025). While these early indications are promising, the extent to which hybrid delivery is consistently implemented across diverse school contexts remains uneven.

Key Features of the ARAL Program

To clarify what is substantively new about ARAL relative to earlier remediation initiatives, Table 1 illustrates that ARAL is distinct from earlier remediation initiatives in its legislative anchoring, system-wide scope, hybrid modalities, diversified personnel model, and integration into national monitoring systems.

Table 1. Key Features of the ARAL Program Compared with Previous Philippine Remediation Initiatives

Feature	ARAL Program (RA 12028 and DepEd issuances)	Earlier remediation initiatives (examples)
Policy anchoring	Institutionalized by RA 12028 as the national learning recovery and remediation program, with detailed implementing rules and DepEd Orders (e.g., DO 018, s. 2025) that define scope, governance, and funding.	Implemented through discrete programs such as Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3Bs) national reading initiative and the Care for NorMin Readers (CNR) regional initiative in Northern Mindanao, as well as summer remediation and learning camps, often under time-bound memoranda or regional issuances rather than a single overarching law.
Target learners	Focuses on K–10 learners with substantial literacy and numeracy gaps, including those most affected by pandemic-related disruptions and those flagged in diagnostic tools (e.g., CRLA, RMA, Phil-IRI).	3Bs targets early-grade learners who struggle in reading, with the goal that “every child is a reader,” while CNR focuses on elementary and high school students in Region X who need intensive reading support in mother tongue, Filipino, and English; summer and regional remediation programs serve specific groups identified by local assessments.
Program scope and duration	Designed as a continuing, system-wide learning recovery program integrated into the regular school year and summer periods, with the intent of long-term institutionalization at national scale.	3Bs is a national reading initiative built around campaign-style implementation and defined activity windows (e.g., December–March cycles), while CNR operates as a regional initiative in Northern Mindanao; many summer academic remediation and reading camps run for limited weeks during vacation or specific school years.
Delivery modalities	Uses hybrid modalities: face-to-face small-group tutorials, modular resources, digital platforms, and video-based materials, with guidance for adapting to connectivity constraints.	3Bs emphasizes reading clinics, school-based reading centres, and classroom-embedded activities focused on the six elements of reading; CNR uses pull-out schemes, daily half-hour reading lessons, and reading clinics; most activities are face-to-face with limited integration into national digital platforms.
Personnel	Deploys a broader cadre of tutors including teachers, para-teachers, pre-service teachers, retired educators, and trained community volunteers, with explicit guidelines for recruitment, training, and supervision.	3Bs designates school reading coordinators and classroom teachers as key implementers, sometimes supported by volunteers; CNR relies primarily on teachers trained in reading instruction and remedial strategies; staffing is defined more by local capacity and regional guidance than by a unified national tutor framework.
Monitoring and data systems	Integrates the ARAL Dashboard with the Learner Information System, weekly progress reports, and division-level Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment (DMEA) processes using standardized tools.	3Bs and CNR use reading profiles, clinic records, and periodic assessments to track progress at school and division level, but monitoring is largely paper-based or localized and less systematically linked to national dashboards and LIS-based analytics.
Alignment with lifelong learning	Explicitly framed as a pillar of post-pandemic learning recovery and inclusive lifelong learning, linked to SDG 4 and human capital development agendas.	3Bs and CNR focus on foundational reading as a prerequisite for later learning and have strong advocacy components to foster a culture of reading; however, their framing in policy documents is more centered on immediate literacy improvement than on system-wide lifelong learning architecture.

Adaptive Leadership Practices for Inclusive Lifelong Learning

Adaptive leadership under ARAL empowers school heads to coordinate tutor mentoring, stakeholder partnerships, and resource adaptation, blending transformational and servant leadership orientations (Heifetz et al., 2009). Practices such as Learning Action Cell (LAC) facilitation, SPED-inclusive planning, and crisis-responsive delegation align with SDG 4 equity goals (Delos Santos, 2025). Evidence from rural schools indicates improved retention and resilience through distributed governance, with division focal persons orchestrating monitoring and capacity-building (Villanueva, 2025).

These practices reinforce ARAL's role in cultivating adaptations, such as indigenous language Phil-IRI variants in Bukidnon, demonstrate responsiveness to cultural contexts (Pascual, 2026). Empirical reviews confirm that dashboard-monitored schools achieved faster proficiency recovery compared to non-users, though rural paper-based reporting gaps persist (Gatchalian, 2025). Sustaining equity requires hybrid monitoring protocols and strengthened LGU partnerships, embedding accountability within inclusive lifelong learning frameworks (Dela Cruz, 2026). Sustaining equity will require hybrid monitoring protocols and strengthened partnerships with local government units, embedding accountability within inclusive lifelong learning frameworks.

Monitoring Mechanisms in the Aral Program

ARAL's monitoring framework integrates real-time school-level tools with division-wide oversight, anchored in DepEd Order No. 018 (Angara, 2025). Central to this system is the ARAL Dashboard, which aggregates Learner Information System (LIS) data on learner progress, attendance, and intervention dosage. Weekly Progress Monitoring Reports, submitted through Google Forms or Excel templates, capture diagnostic shifts (e.g., Phil-IRI pre-post gains) and fidelity metrics. At the division level, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment (DMEA) teams conduct quarterly validations using standardized rubrics to ensure consistency and accountability (Villanueva, 2025).

Localized adaptations highlight the framework's responsiveness to diverse contexts. In Bukidnon and Region X, mobile validation teams traverse rural terrain to achieve 85% compliance, while indigenous language variants of Phil-IRI integrate feedback from IP communities (Pascual, 2026). Region X's ARAL Focal System synchronizes division dashboards with regional portals, enabling SMS triangulation and barangay validation to recover attendance in remote schools, though geospatial data gaps persist in 15% of sitios (Quibod, 2025).

Available reports suggest that schools actively using ARAL dashboards and standardized monitoring protocols have experienced faster reported proficiency gains than those relying on paper-based reporting alone, although these patterns are observational and may reflect pre-existing differences in school capacity (Gatchalian, 2025; Dela Cruz, 2026). Thematic syntheses identify enablers such as focal person training and barriers including internet downtime and device shortages, prompting recommendations for hybrid monitoring models and stronger local government partnerships to sustain equity (Dela Cruz, 2026). Overall, the monitoring system appears to embed accountability and adaptability and is positioned as a key mechanism for advancing inclusive lifelong learning within the ARAL framework.

Provisions of RA 12028

Republic Act No. 12028 (ARAL Program Act, 2024) institutionalizes the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program, directly addressing pandemic-induced learning gaps and ensuring equitable access to foundational skills. Its provisions strongly align with inclusive lifelong learning principles by prioritizing literacy, numeracy, and science competencies for struggling learners across public and private schools. Research has shown that pandemic disruptions widened educational inequities, particularly in reading and mathematics (Morton & Hashim, 2023). By mandating structured tutorials, flexible delivery modes, and community-based support, the law operationalizes inclusive education by ensuring that no learner is excluded regardless of socioeconomic background or school type. This reflects the lifelong learning principle of accessibility, where education is treated as a continuing right rather than a privilege, and interventions are designed to sustain learners' progression across grade levels.

Moreover, RA 12028 aligns with global frameworks on lifelong learning by embedding recovery programs into the Philippine education system as a permanent policy rather than a temporary fix. Studies emphasize that literacy and numeracy are foundational for lifelong learning and workforce readiness (Carbonari et al., 2024). The ARAL Program's emphasis on learner-centered tutorials, trained facilitators, and accessible delivery modes (face-to-face, online, blended) reflects UNESCO's advocacy for inclusive, flexible learning pathways (UNESCO, 2023). By institutionalizing support for marginalized learners, including those in private schools through DepEd partnerships, the law advances equity and inclusivity, ensuring that lifelong learning is not disrupted by socioeconomic or geographic barriers. Thus, RA 12028 strengthens the Philippine education system's capacity to uphold inclusive lifelong learning principles in the post-pandemic era.

Successes of ARAL Policy Implementation

For School Year 2025–2026, early DepEd reports indicate notable improvements in literacy and numeracy outcomes among early grade learners associated with ARAL implementation. Data from Beginning of School Year and End of School Year assessments suggest that literacy proficiency rates in Grades 1–3 increased relative to the previous year, and numeracy proficiency also improved, particularly in schools with sustained ARAL implementation (Department of Education, 2026). These gains have been attributed to the systematic use of diagnostic tools such as the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment and the Phil IRI, which enabled schools to design more targeted interventions for struggling learners (Carbonari et al., 2024).

In addition, the deployment of a large cadre of trained tutors and aides, including teachers, retired educators, pre-service teachers, and community volunteers, has expanded the program's reach and contributed to more consistent learner support (De los Santos et al., 2025). The implementation of ARAL School Readiness and Responsiveness Audits (ASRRA) further assessed public and private schools as well as ALS community learning centers, with a substantial proportion of schools reportedly meeting minimum readiness standards for ARAL delivery (UNESCO, 2023). The tiered intervention model, in which learners are grouped based on diagnostic results and may exit or continue in the program depending on progress, appears to have facilitated more flexible and needs based remediation; learners requiring extended support have been able to join ARAL summer programs and allied initiatives (World Bank, 2022). Collectively, these developments suggest that ARAL has begun to translate legislative intent into measurable improvements in foundational learning, particularly in the early grades.

Challenges of ARAL Policy Implementation

Despite these gains, ARAL faces implementation challenges in governance and leadership structures. Studies emphasize that centralized leadership models limit adaptability, while distributed leadership fosters stronger ownership and responsiveness (Cheng, 2024). However, uneven collaboration among schools, local governments, and communities has hindered consistent delivery of interventions (De Los Santos et al., 2025). Additionally, resource constraints, such as shortages of trained tutors, limited digital infrastructure, and uneven access to learning materials, pose barriers to equitable implementation, especially in rural areas.

Another challenge is the uneven impact across grade levels. While foundational learners show marked improvement, senior high school students demonstrate weaker gains, with some declining results in core subjects (DepEd, 2025). This suggests that ARAL's design is more effective for early remediation but less suited for advanced learners who require specialized interventions. Persistent learning poverty rates above 90% in low-income areas also indicate that ARAL's reach is insufficient to fully reverse systemic inequities (World Bank, 2022).

Gaps of ARAL Policy Implementation

One of the key gaps in the implementation of the ARAL Policy is the uneven accessibility across different learner groups and school types. While RA 12028 mandates inclusivity, many private school learners and marginalized groups—such as those in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas—still face limited access due to slot shortages and uneven program coverage (Department of Education, 2026). The reliance on volunteer tutors and para-teachers also raises concerns about instructional quality, as not all facilitators receive adequate training in

pedagogy and child development (De Los Santos, et. al., 2025). This inconsistency undermines the program's goal of equitable learning recovery, leaving some learners at risk of being excluded from meaningful interventions.

Another gap lies in the long-term sustainability and monitoring of ARAL's outcomes. Current assessments primarily focus on short-term literacy and numeracy gains, but there is limited evidence of the program's impact on higher-order skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning competencies (Carbonari et al., 2024). Without robust monitoring systems and continuous funding, ARAL risks becoming a temporary remedial measure rather than a transformative educational reform. Furthermore, gaps in digital infrastructure and resource distribution continue to hinder effective implementation in rural areas, where learning poverty remains high (World Bank, 2022). Addressing these gaps requires stronger institutional capacity, equitable resource allocation, and integration of ARAL into broader education reforms to ensure its sustainability and alignment with lifelong learning principles.

Limitations

This scoping review and policy analysis has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, much of the available evidence derives from government-produced evaluations, DepEd reports, and official policy documents, which may reflect institutional priorities and framing and may under-represent implementation challenges highlight by independent actors such as teacher organizations or civil society groups. Second, because the underlying evidence is predominantly observational and descriptive, we cannot infer causal effects of the ARAL Program or earlier remediation initiatives on learner outcomes; any reported improvements should be interpreted as associations, and correlation should not be equated with causation.

Third, the review is potentially affected by publication and reporting bias: internal evaluations, unfavorable results, and null findings are less likely to be publicly disseminated, which may skew the emerging evidence base. Fourth, many of the evaluations and implementation reports lack explicit comparison or control groups, limiting our ability to distinguish program-related changes from broader reforms, cohort effects, or contextual shifts over time. Finally, the analysis is context-specific; ARAL and the reviewed remediation initiatives are embedded in the Philippine basic education system, so the generalizability of these findings to other countries or educational systems is limited.

CONCLUSION

The enactment of Republic Act No. 12028 represents a decisive, evidence-based policy response to the profound learning losses experienced by Filipino learners in the post-pandemic context. Grounded in empirical data from EDCOM II, PISA 2022, and the Learner Information System, the law demonstrates how legislative action can translate urgent educational concerns into a structured national recovery framework. By institutionalizing the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program, policymakers shifted from fragmented remediation efforts toward a coherent, learner-centered approach that integrates academic support with broader social interventions. This alignment with constitutional mandates and global lifelong learning frameworks underscores the Act's role not merely as a short-term solution, but as a strategic investment in human capital development and long-term educational resilience.

The implementation of ARAL reveals a dynamic interplay between innovation and contextual adaptation in addressing learning recovery. School-level tracking tools, hybrid delivery models, and adaptive leadership practices collectively contributed to measurable improvements in literacy and numeracy outcomes, particularly among early grade learners. The integration of real-time monitoring systems, such as dashboards and diagnostic assessments, strengthened accountability and enabled data-driven decision-making across governance levels. Moreover, localized strategies, such as culturally responsive assessments and mobile validation teams, highlight the program's flexibility in addressing diverse learner needs. These successes affirm that when supported by strong monitoring mechanisms and collaborative leadership, large-scale education reforms can yield tangible gains and reinforce inclusive lifelong learning systems.

However, the persistence of structural challenges and implementation gaps tempers these achievements and signals the need for sustained policy refinement. Inequities in access, resource limitations, and uneven program impact across grade levels reveal that ARAL's benefits are not yet uniformly distributed. Concerns regarding tutor quality, digital infrastructure, and long-term outcome monitoring further indicate that the program's sustainability depends on strengthened institutional capacity and deeper integration into systemic education reforms. To fully realize the transformative potential of RA 12028, future efforts must prioritize equitable resource allocation, continuous professional development, and expanded evaluation frameworks that capture higher-order learning outcomes. Ultimately, while ARAL has laid a strong foundation for recovery, its long-term success will depend on its evolution from a remedial initiative into a comprehensive and enduring pillar of inclusive lifelong learning in the Philippines.

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