Optimizing Lifelong Learning Opportunity for the Out-of-School Youth and Adults: A Needs Assessment for Empowerment and Educational Advancement

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Article Info	Abstract
	As advocated in UNSDG 4, lifelong learning is crucial in providing alternative learning opportunities to marginalized individuals with limited access to formal education. Through the non-formal and informal education projects under the Alternative Learning System (ALS), the out-of-school youth and adults are given a chance to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enhance their employability, personal development, and overall well-being. This needs analysis research, anchored with the Participatory Learning and Action Approach and the Theory of Critical Pedagogy, aimed at designing innovative non-formal and informal education projects aligned with the needs and interests of out-of-school youth and adults. The data collected from 136 ALS learners showed that the priority projects should focus on pre-employment activities, personality development and career planning, substance abuse prevention, eCommerce and entrepreneurship, cooking and baking, and sports and fitness. Results revealed that the project components are implemented successfully to a moderate extent. The factors that affected its implementation included the need for more sufficient resources, inadequate monitoring and evaluation, and limited opportunities to participate or apply the acquired skills. The ALS learners pinpointed that low interest or motivation, lack of time due to work commitments, low awareness of the programs, and transportation or distance-related issues contributed to low peer engagement.

Introduction

Lifelong learning is essential to an individual's personal growth and development. This is especially true for out-of-school children, youth, and adults (OSCs, OSYs, and OSAs) who could not complete their primary education for various reasons. In this rapidly evolving world, characterized by disruption, volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, and diversity (D-VUCAD), lifelong learning allows the OSCs, OSYs, and OSAs to improve their knowledge and skills, increase their employment opportunities, foster personal growth, and contribute meaningfully to the society. Utilizing lifelong learning as a central educational approach can assist in meeting various goals established by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and prioritizing critical groups within

society. While informal and non-formal learnings are overlooked in SDG initiatives, especially regarding poverty, health, and environmental sustainability, they can potentially serve underserved populations most effectively (Karani & Preece, 2019; Rogers, 2019).

In the Philippines, lifelong learning initiatives, such as the Alternative Learning System (ALS), have been promoted extensively. It is a parallel learning system with formal education that combines the principles of non-formal and informal education (Department of Education [DepEd], 2019). With the institutionalization of ALS through RA11510, the programs, activities, and projects geared towards educating the OSYs and OSAs are given renewed attention. Community learning centers and other community organizations are central to empowering the local community through formal, non-formal, and informal education for all ages, cultural, economic, social, and ethnic backgrounds. They have the commitment and capacity to provide learning opportunities for socially, economically, and culturally marginalized people in the locality (Noguchi et al., 2015).

However, there are significant challenges in achieving this goal, particularly in developing countries with limited access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities (Ejarque & Campos, 2020; Nogueiro et al., 2022). In too many countries, Adult Learning Education needs to be more represented in data collection, and the work of Community Learning Centers (CLCs) and other community-based learning institutions still needs to find its way into systems of educational statistics. This makes monitoring efforts nationally and subsequently globally more difficult (Belete et al., 2022).

Although the Philippine government and DepEd championed remarkable progress in promoting lifelong learning through ALS, there is an urgent requirement to evaluate and understand the specific requirements of out-of-school youth and adults. Based on the researchers' observation and interviews during immersion, limited informal education programs, activities, and projects have been implemented in the different community learning centers in SDO Batangas City. It is in this premise that the research project is conceptualized. The needs assessment will help suggest cutting-edge projects and activities that are tailored, more responsive, and context-specific to their academic needs (Osawa, 2021).

This initiative is driven by the Participatory Learning and Action Approach (Napier & Sinister, 2017) and the Theory of Critical Pedagogy (Serrano et al., 2015). The Participatory Learning and Action approach emphasizes the active involvement of learners in assessing their own needs and the design of learning experiences. In informal education, this approach may be applied by involving learners in the needs assessment process, allowing them to identify their needs and goals, and co-creating learning experiences with them. On the other hand, the Theory of Critical Pedagogy focuses on the role of education in social justice and transformation. In informal education, this theory is applied by conducting needs assessments that consider learners' social and economic context and designing learning experiences that aim to empower learners and address social inequalities.

The needs assessment analysis aimed at proposing non-formal and informal education projects aligned with the needs of out-of-school youth and adults through the alternative learning system program. More specifically, it sought to:

1. characterize the out-of-school youth and adults under the Alternative Learning Systems in Schools Division of Batangas City

2. assess the extent of implementation of the non-formal and informal education in the ALS program

3. identify gaps and areas for improvement in the implementation of the existing non-formal and informal education in the ALS program

4. design innovative non-formal and informal education projects that are aligned with the needs and interests of out-of-school youth and adults

Method

This research employed the descriptive research design utilizing the survey method. The target respondents, selected purposively, were out-of-school youth and adults at least 18 years old and attending the Alternative Learning System in any community learning center in Batangas City. One hundred forty (140) ALS learners have responded to the survey questionnaire. However, only 136 responses were considered in the analysis because some participants needed to provide complete responses to the questions.

The survey questionnaire asked for the respondents' demographic profile (community learning center, age, sex, affiliation to indigenous people group, civil status, ALS program being taken, employment status and industry, and interests), participation in (6 items), and assessment of the implementation (8 items) of the non-formal (NFE) and informal education (INFED) programs, and preferences on the various NFE and INFED projects (12 items). They were asked to identify the challenges concerning their participation in the NFE and INFED projects (7 items) and project implementation (6 items). The items were rated using a 4-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 - Strongly Disagree/Least Extent/Not important or preferred, 2 - Disagree/Less Extent/Moderately not important or preferred, 3 - Agree/Moderate Extent/Moderately important or preferred, 4 - Strongly Agree/Great Extent/ Most important or preferred). The respondents were also encouraged to provide comments, feedback, and additional information about the NFE and INFED projects. The questionnaire was drafted in both English and Filipino for better comprehension. The instrument underwent validation from ALS experts, researchers, and educators.

The College Research Ethics Committee reviewed and approved the project to ensure that the necessary provisions, procedures, and methods adhere to the ethical practice of conducting research. The approval and endorsement of the Schools Division Superintendent and the Planning and Research Office were sought before disseminating the questionnaire, including the informed consent form. To ensure the data's anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy, only disaggregated data were reported, and other identifying information (e.g., name) was excluded from the analysis. The raw data will be kept for two years and only be shared with DepEd Planning and Research Office for action planning.

The collected data were processed and analyzed using frequency count, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. In establishing the consensus, at least 90% of the respondents with an overall mark of 3 or 4 were considered. To effectively identify which projects and activities to prioritize, the Pareto Principle was employed.

Results

Description of the Alternative Learning Systems (ALS) Learners

Table 1 shows the profile of the ALS learners who participated in the study. It should be noted that the majority of the respondents (n = 101, 74.30%) were attending the community learning centers located in Alangilan Elementary School (n = 12, 8.80%), Balete Elementary School (n = 10, 7.40%), Kumintang Elementary School (n = 22, 16.20%), Libjo Elementary School (n = 22, 16.20%), Malitam Learning Center (n = 23, 16.90%), and NAVERA Memorial Integrated School (n = 12, 8.80%). More than half of the ALS learners were female (n = 71, 52.20%), aged 18-22 years old (n = 75, 55.10%), single (n = 85, 62.50%), and were enrolled in the Accreditation and Equivalency Program for Junior High School Level (n = 117, 86.00%).

Table 1. Description of the Alternative Learning Systems (ALS) Learners

Profile Variables		n	%
Community Learning	Alangilan Elementary School	12	8.80
Center (CLC)	Balete Elementary School	10	7.40
	Kumintang Elementary School	22	16.20
	Libjo Elementary School	22	16.20
	Malitam Learning Center	23	16.90
	NAVERA Memorial Integrated School	12	8.80
	Other CLCs	35	25.70
Age Group	18-22 years old	75	55.10
	23-27 years old	31	22.80
	28-32 years old	14	10.30
	33-27 years old	9	6.60
	>37 years old	7	5.10
Sex	Female	71	52.20
	Male	65	47.80
Indigenous Peoples Group	Yes	8	5.90
	No	128	94.10
Civil Status	Single	85	62.50
	Married	46	33.80
	Separated/Widow/Widower	5	3.70
ALS Program Currently	Basic Literacy Program	6	4.40
Attending	Accreditation & Equivalency – Elementary	13	9.60
	Accreditation & Equivalency – Junior High School	117	86.00
Employment Status	Permanent	27	19.90
	Contractual	47	34.60
	Self-employed	9	6.60
	Unemployed	53	39.00

Profile Variables		n	%
Industry of Employment	Agriculture & Fishery	8	5.90
	Domestic Worker/Caregiving/ Beauty Care	7	5.20
	Commerce/eCommerce (online selling)	20	14.70
	Construction	25	18.40
	Transportation/Delivery Service/Tracking	6	4.40
	Manufacturing/Factory/Electronics	6	4.40
	Food and Beverage	8	5.90
	Others (Government & Security)	3	2.20
Interests*	Fashion, Design, Tailoring, Sewing	8	5.90
	Agriculture, Horticulture, Urban Gardening	22	16.20
	Sports and Fitness	45	33.10
	Community Service/Volunteer Works	10	7.40
	Music and Performing Arts	15	11.00
	Painting and Sculpture	6	4.40
	Wellness/Alternative Healing	7	5.10
	Do-It-Yourself Projects	6	4.40
	Cooking and Baking	68	50.00
	Others (Driving, ICT, Perfume/Soap-making, Tattoo Art)	6	4.40
Total		136	100.00

Note: *multiple responses are allowed

Most participants were engaged in contractual work (n = 47, 34.60%) or unemployed (n = 53, 39.00%). Those who are employed are engaged in the fields of commerce and online selling (n = 20, 14.70%), construction (n = 25, 18.40%), agriculture or fishery (n = 8, 5.90%), food and beverage (n = 8, 5.90%), domestic work, caregiving, or beauty care (n = 7, 5.20%), transportation, delivery service, or tracking (n = 6, 4.40%), and manufacturing (n = 6, 4.40%). Furthermore, the data also show that the respondents have diverse interests that include cooking and baking (n = 68, 50.00%), sports and fitness (n = 45, 33.10%), agriculture, horticulture, and urban gardening (n = 22, 16.20%), music and performing arts (n = 15, 11.00%), community service or volunteer works (n = 10, 7.40%), and tailoring or sewing (n = 8, 5.90%).

Implementation of the Non-formal (NFE) and Informal Education (INFED) Programs

Table 2 presents the respondents' participation in the different NFE and INFED programs offered in the various CLCs. The data shows that most respondents have participated in the NFE or INFED activities provided in the ALS curriculum through the Accreditation & Equivalency or Basic Literacy Program (n = 136, 100.00%). In addition, the learners were able to join other NFE or INFED activities such as the Peer Educator's Training (n = 16, 11.80%, basic photography (n = 10, 7.40%), livelihood education (n = 5, 3.70%), and computer literacy (n = 1, 0.70%).

Table 2. Participation in Non-formal and Informal Education Programs

Indicators	n	%
Participation in NFE/INFED Programs		
Yes	101	74.30
No	35	25.70
NFE/INFED Programs*		
Accreditation & Equivalency/ Basic Literacy programs	136	100.00
Peer Educator's Training	16	11.80
Photography	10	7.40
Sulong Pangkabuhayan (Livelihood Education)	5	3.70
Computer Literacy	1	0.70
Total	136	100.00

Note: *Multiple responses allowed

In Table 3, the respondents agree that the NFE (M = 3.47, SD = 0.46) and INFED (M = 2.70, SD = 1.06) programs were implemented to a moderate extent. The relatively high variations in the responses suggest that not all respondents may have the same perception regarding the NFE and INFED program implementation.

Table 3. Assessment of the Non-formal and Informal Education Programs Implementation

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Implementation of Nonformal Education	**3.47**	**0.46**	**Moderate Extent**
The competencies developed are aligned with ALS K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum.	3.59	0.55	Strongly Agree
The learning activities are tailored to the context of ALS program.	3.46	0.61	Agree
The program is built on individualized learning agreement.	3.44	0.63	Agree
Learning outcomes are assessed on a quarterly basis.	3.25	0.80	Agree
The ALS teachers utilize digital technologies and tools for effective teaching and learning.	3.45	0.64	Agree
The program promotes equal educational opportunity for all.	3.62	0.55	Strongly Agree
Implementation of Informal Education	**2.70**	**1.06**	**Moderate Extent**
The program is effectively implemented.	2.79	1.13	Agree
The program is accessible to all ALS learners.	2.71	1.16	Agree
The program is anchored and integrated within the ALS K to 12 Curriculum.	2.67	1.10	Agree
The program is aligned and relevant to the industry's needs.	2.70	1.10	Agree
The program has practical applications to the daily lives of the ALS learners.	2.68	1.10	Agree
The program effectively addresses the needs and goals of the ALS learners.	2.67	1.13	Agree
The program is tailored to the various interest and learning styles of the	2.68	1.10	Agree

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
ALS learners.			
The program helps develop creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.	2.74	1.13	Agree

Legend: 1.00-1.49 Strongly Disagree/Least Extent, 1.50-2.49 Disagree/Less Extent, 2.50-3.49 Agree/Moderate Extent, 3.50-4.00 Strongly Agree/Great Extent

Challenges in the Implementation of the Non-formal and Informal Education Programs

Table 4 presents the challenges encountered in implementing NFE and INFED programs in the various CLCs. The ALS learners agree that the programs, activities, and projects are greatly affected by the lack of sufficient resources and materials (M = 2.76, SD = 0.98), limited opportunities for practical applications/hands-on activities (M = 2.71, SD = 1.71) and participation (M = 2.68, SD = 0.95), and inadequate monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes (M = 2.64, SD = 0.94). The high variations in the responses may indicate that other CLCs were able to give the provisions needed to implement the NFE and INFED programs. It should be noted further that the respondents agree that the programs meet their needs and preferences (M = 2.47, SD = 0.89) and that the ALS teachers are prepared and skillful in executing the NFE and INFED programs (M = 2.44, SD = 1.05).

Table 4. Challenges in the Implementation of Non-formal and Informal Education Programs

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
The program lacks sufficient resources and materials.	2.76	0.98	Agree
The program partially meets the varied needs and preferences of the students.	2.47	0.89	Disagree
The program offers a limited range of activities and projects for participation.	2.68	0.95	Agree
The program provides limited opportunities for practical application and essential hands-on activities.	2.71	1.01	Agree
The regular monitoring and assessment to ensure the quality of program outcomes are inadequate.	2.64	0.94	Agree
The ALS teachers lack the preparedness and skills required to teach non-formal and informal education programs.	2.44	1.05	Disagree

Legend: 1.00-1.49 Strongly Disagree, 1.50-2.49 Disagree, 2.50-3.49 Agree, 3.50-4.00 Strongly Agree

Barriers to participating successfully in the NFE and INFED programs are shown in Table 5. The learners agree that they are hindered from fully engaging with the program due to low levels of interest and motivation (M = 2.61, SD = 0.94), lack of time due to work commitments (M = 2.60, SD 0.97), transportation or distance-related issues (M = 2.55, SD = 0.92), and low awareness and knowledge about the programs (M = 2.54, SD = 0.98). On a positive note, ALS learners are no longer hindered by financial constraints (M = 2.48, SD = 0.89) or low self-esteem or self-confidence (M = 2.27, SD = 1.01). Furthermore, they agree that the programs are more inclusive as language and culture are not to be considered a problem (M = 2.40, SD = 0.95).

Table 5. Challenges in Participating in the Non-formal and Informal Education Programs

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Low levels of interest or motivation	2.61	0.94	Agree
Insufficient financial support	2.48	0.89	Disagree
Lack of time due to work commitments	2.60	0.97	Agree
Low awareness and knowledge about the programs	2.54	0.98	Agree
Transportation or distance related issues	2.55	0.92	Agree
Language and cultural barriers	2.40	0.95	Disagree
Low self-esteem or self-confidence	2.27	1.01	Disagree

Legend: 1.00-1.49 Strongly Disagree, 1.50-2.49 Disagree, 2.50-3.49 Agree, 3.50-4.00 Strongly Agree

Proposed Alternative Learning System Non-formal and Informal Education Programs

Table 6 presents the ALS learners' consensus and preferences for the NFE and INFED programs. Applying the Pareto Principle, the topmost projects prioritized for implementation include writing an application letter and resume (M = 3.63, SD = 0.57) and self-improvement, personality development, skills enhancement, career planning, and basic literacy (M = 3.70, SD = 0.64), and substance abuse prevention (M = 2.60, SD = 0.63).

Table 6. Learners' Preferences for NFE/INFED Programs

Indicators	Consensus	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Writing an application letter and resume.	97.10%	3.63	0.57	Most Important/ Preferred
Self-improvement, personality development, skills enhancement, career planning, basic literacy	96.60%	3.70	0.64	Most Important/ Preferred
Substance Abuse Prevention	95.50%	3.60	0.63	Most Important/ Preferred
Recycling and Environmental Literacy	94.90%	3.62	0.68	Most Important/ Preferred
Climate Change and Global Warming	94.80%	3.60	0.61	Most Important/ Preferred
Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction Management	93.40%	3.61	0.68	Most Important/ Preferred
Food Preservation	93.40%	3.59	0.64	Most Important/ Preferred
Green Education & Waste Management	93.00%	3.60	0.74	Most Important/ Preferred
Responsible Parenthood and Family Planning	92.60%	3.62	0.69	Most Important/ Preferred
ICT and Digital Literacy	92.60%	3.57	0.67	Most Important/ Preferred
Hydroponics and Urban Gardening	92.60%	3.51	0.72	Most Important/ Preferred
Entrepreneurship	91.20%	3.59	0.72	Most Important/ Preferred

Legend: 1.00-1.49 Not important/preferred, 1.50-2.49 moderately not important/preferred, 2.50-3.49 moderately important/preferred, 3.50-4.00 Most important/preferred

Discussion

It is not very surprising that the majority of ALS learners are younger females. This result is consistent with the

findings that female learners are more likely to attend the sessions regularly and complete the program than their male peers (Igarashi, 2018; Osawa, 2021). The results posited the previous findings that employment and poverty are the significant reasons learners participate in the ALS program (Salazar et al., 2020). Thus, purposeful planning of the NFE and INFED programs under the ALS Program should include livelihood, entrepreneurial, and skills training to increase student engagement. The learners' interest should be highly considered in planning activities and projects for non-formal and informal education as this intrinsically motivates them to participate and complete the programs (Bonk & Lee, 2017). It is also essential to consider that ALS learners may have different interests than their current occupation, highlighting a potential mismatch between educational and vocational pursuits. Therefore, when designing non-formal and informal education programs for ALS learners, it is crucial to remember that their interests may not align with their current employment.

One could hypothesize that the scope of learning opportunities offered by educators and administrators in the ALS program, operating under both NFE and INFED initiatives, is confined solely to those activities delineated within the ALS instructional modules. Moreover, the projects and activities must align with the learners' current employment, interests, and realities. Hanemann (2019) emphasizes the importance of a lifelong learning strategy that prioritizes how literacy fits into learners' lives, what it means to them, and where potential sources of interest or difficulty might lie. The need to contextualize and tailor learning opportunities to specific learners or community needs should be paired with a public responsibility to ensure the attainment of core competencies.

As revealed in previous studies, ALS teachers and implementers exhibited incongruence regarding program implementation with its non-formal mode and external engagements (Gochuico, 2021; Lozada, 2022). Based on the study of Flores (2022), ALS teachers need help with resources. It shows convergence with the qualitative data that lack of learning facilities and materials is the topmost problem encountered by ALS teachers in the implementation of ALS programs, with twenty-five (25) out of thirty (30) ALS teachers citing the same problem. According to Arpilleda (2018), four problems emerged in implementing the Alternative Learning System program. One of which is the need for instructional materials to effectively teach their learners in the far-flung barangays of Tandag City. Their ALS teachers also complained about the absence of permanent learning centers and other facilities.

The data confirmed that out-of-school youths face significant opportunity costs that are not only related to paid employment or labor but also issues with the accessibility of learning opportunities. Furthermore, operational spending and improving ALS facilities are essential in keeping ALS learners engaged and motivated (World Bank Group, 2018). It is essential to mention that ALS learners 'participation and engagement in the NFE and INFED programs are driven by their aspiration to obtain skills relevant to their future careers as well as to make the most of the educational opportunities available (Vayachuta et al., 2016; World Bank Group, 2018). Other projects based on the learners' preferences and occupations were considered. The details of these undertakings, including a project description, objectives, key results indicators, expected output, and cooperating partner agencies and stakeholders, are delineated in Table 7. To further promote ALS through advocacy and social mobilization (AdSocMob), ALS teachers may need to collaborate with private organizations and individuals via Public-Private Partnerships alongside other government entities like the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

(TESDA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and local government units (LGUs). These collaborative efforts ensure a sustainable and innovative approach to the NFE and INFED programs (DepEd, 2021).

Table 7. Matrix of Proposed Projects for the Non-formal and Informal Education Programs

Project Title & Description	Project Objectives	Key Results Indicators	Partner Agencies or Stakeholders	Expected Outputs
ALS Angat sa Trabaho: Pre-Employment Training The project is designed to provide critical skills and knowledge required for successful participation in the job market. The focus of this initiative is to offer unemployed out-of-school youth and adults with practical training in writing effective resumes, cover letters and undergoing successful job interviews. Modality: Face-to-face Technology Requirement & Supplies:	To develop the out-of-school youth and adults' understanding and proficiency in writing effective resumes and application letters. To enhance the out-of-school youth and adults' interview skills and confidence in presenting themselves during job interviews. ALS Curricular Alignment: Learning Strand 1 - Communications Skills Learning Strand 4 - Life and Career Skills	Increased percentage of out-of-school youth and adults who demonstrated improved resume and application letter writing skills as measured by pre- and post-training assessments. Higher proportions of out-of-school youth and adults who exhibited improved level of confidence and preparedness for job interviews as measured by post-training evaluations	Department of Labor and Employment may provide access to information about labor market demands and job opportunities in the area. Local government units may facilitate coordination between and among the job seekers and business owners. Private sector companies may be coordinated for any potential job placement opportunities.	Developed well-structured resumes that highlight their skills, qualifications, and relevant experiences. Compelling application letters that effectively communicate their interest and suitability for the job position Effectively responding to interview questions with confidence

Project Title & Description	Project Objectives	Key Results Indicators	Partner Agencies or Stakeholders	Expected Outputs
- Computers and Printers - Mobile Phones - Coupon bonds Duration: 1-2 days				
Personality Development Training The program is aimed at providing out-of-school youth and adults with essential life skills and knowledge that positively contributes to enhanced personal growth and interpersonal development. The participants are expected to gain the necessary strategies that will help improve their life skills and overall personality which will enable them to overcome different life situations with greater success. This can be implemented side by side with the Self-Directed Modules 7 & 8.	To inculcate essential life skills as well as positive qualities such as punctuality, flexible attitude, willingness to learn, friendly nature, and eagerness to help others. To improve out-of-school youths and adults' communication skills and self-presentation. ALS Curricular Alignment: Learning Strand 4 - Life and Career Skills Learning Strand 5 - Understanding the Self and Society	Increased percentage of out-of-school youth and adults who possessed life skills and positive qualities. Higher proportions of out-of-school youth and adults who can communicate and present themselves properly.	Guidance Counselor from DepEd may provide training on personality development with emphasis on career planning and development of personality. Collaboration with other educational institutions such as universities and colleges in the area that can help in developing the training program and may provide trainers/mentors with expertise in personality development.	Demonstrated positive qualities such as punctuality, flexible attitude, willingness to learn, friendly nature, and eagerness to help others. Communicate effectively in various context, either in verbal or nonverbal formats.

Project Title & Description	Project Objectives	Key Results Indicators	Partner Agencies or Stakeholders	Expected Outputs
Modality: Face-to-face Duration: 4-7 days (based on the Self-Directed Modules)				
Sagip Buhay: Substance Abuse Prevention The project is designed to provide out-of-school youth and adults with information about substance abuse and its legal, personal, and societal implications. This initiative is geared towards better understanding and awareness about the harm/risk associated with substance abuse. Modality: Online/Virtual via video teleconferencing Duration: 2-3 days	To raise awareness about the risks and consequences of substance abuse. To inform the participants about proactive solutions to prevent substance abuse. ALS Curricular Alignment: Learning Strand 2 - Scientific and Critical Thinking Skills	The participants showed an improvement in their knowledge and awareness of the risks and consequences of substance abuse, gauged by the pre- and post-tests.	Department of Health and Department of Social Welfare and Development will play a crucial role in the training by providing technical expertise, guidelines, and resources. Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and or the Philippine National Police can contribute to the awareness campaigns against drug abuse and its consequences.	Participants has manifested the ability to make informed choices and strategies to resist substance abuse. Display strong commitment by becoming advocates fro substance abuse prevention in their community.
EntrePinoy: Halina't Magnegosyo Tayo This project	To help participants gain in-depth and practical knowledge and	Majority of the target participants, particularly the unemployed individuals, had	Department of Trade and Industry can provide access to resources and mentorship	Develop viable and well-structured business plans. Successfully

Project Title & Description	Project Objectives	Key Results Indicators	Partner Agencies or Stakeholders	Expected Outputs
underscores the importance of empowering the out-of-school youth and adults by establishing and managing their own business or livelihood. The training will focus on practical and easy to follow tips and insights to jump start the participants economic activity to improve their current situations. This can be implemented side by side with the Self-Directed Modules 7 & 8. The emphasis of the program is on the promotion of economic empowerment and self-reliance. Modality: Face-to-face and virtual/online via video teleconferencing Duration: 3-5 days (based on the Self-	understanding of entrepreneurship. To foster an entrepreneurial mindset and attitude among the ALS Curricular Alignment: Learning Strand 4 - Life and Career Skills	successfully implemented and sustained their own business or livelihood projects.	programs among the participants. Local government units may facilitate access and partnership with micro financing institutions or cooperatives that can provide financial literacy education and support the establishment of legitimate and reliable savings and credit groups in the community.	establish and sustain their own business or livelihood projects

Project Title & Description	Project Objectives	Key Results Indicators	Partner Agencies or Stakeholders	Expected Outputs
Directed Modules)				
Tara Kain! Basic Cooking and Baking Course	To provide participants with fundamental knowledge and skills in basic cooking and baking including techniques in food preparation, cooking methods, and recipe execution.	All participants are able to apply the gained culinary knowledge and skills in real-life situations.	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority can provide technical assistance, mentor, and additional resources in implementing the project.	Prepared variety of dishes and baked goods
The project is conceptualized at equipping out-of-school youth and adults with essential culinary skills for personal and professional development as well as in pursuit of culinary opportunities.	To develop creativity and proficiency in the art of cooking and baking enabling the participants to venture in profitable business.		Barangay Livelihood Committee may facilitate access to required equipment, resources, and facilities for the hands-on activities.	
Modality: Face-to-face or online using tutorial videos				
Equipment and Supplies: Cooking and Baking Tools; Raw ingredients	ALS Curricular Alignment: Learning Strand 2 - Scientific and Critical Thinking Skills		Local chefs can be partners to offer lectures on specific topics thus exposing participants to industry best practices.	
Duration: 1-2 days for each specific activity.	Learning Strand 4 - Life and Career Skills			
FitPinas: Energizing your Life with Sports and Wellness	To encourage out-of-school youth and adults to engage in activities that promote	Assessment of the participants' physical fitness improvements (i.e, endurance,	Local government units can aid in securing appropriate and convenient venues	Records of improvement in the participants' physical fitness and overall health

Project Title & Description	Project Objectives	Key Results Indicators	Partner Agencies or Stakeholders	Expected Outputs
This project recognizes the importance of physical fitness and sports as means to promote and improve healthy lifestyles, building teamwork skills and discipline, as well as providing opportunities for personal growth and social interactions. This project may constitute the following activity: friendly tournament, sports clinic,	physical fitness and sports participation. To foster the development essential skills and character through sports activities ALS Curricular Alignment: Learning Strand 5 - Understanding the Self and Society	flexibility, agility, etc.) by utilizing standardized fitness tests.	for sports and physical fitness activities. Barangay sports development council may be coordinated to assist in organizing the project and provide the manpower requirement. Non-government organizations that provides sports development and sports clinic may be tapped to provide additional resources, expertise and mentorship services.	
Modality: Face-to-face Duration: at least 1 day per month for an activity				

With the complexities of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOEs), the researchers omitted the details of the budgetary requirements and focused on initiatives for collaboration, innovation, and sustainability. The initiatives demonstrate a forward-thinking approach to optimizing available resources and creating lasting impact within the ALS program. Another feature of the proposed projects is its strong link with the ALS K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum. This ensures seamless integration and alignment of the NFE and INFED initiatives with the curricular requirements of the ALS Program, thus, allowing for better recognition of prior learning (Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Alternative Learning System Act, 2021). The overall design projects

and activities include different learning delivery modalities, such as face-to-face and online modalities.

Conclusion

Despite the various challenges in the implementation of an effective program for out-of-school youth and adults (OSYAs) via the ALS non-formal (NFE) and informal education (INFED) programs, the results revealed that the relevant programs have the potential to empower OSYAs to develop their human capital further. The optimism and determination of the ALS learners and teachers contributed mainly to the success of the programs. The partnership and collaborations among the government institutions and the private sector are deemed essential mechanisms for effective and efficient delivery of the programs, activities and projects. The cross-sector collaborations provide excellent means for pooling of resources, expertise, and networks for strengthening the program capacity and access. This will help sustain the program without much need for large funding from the school's MOOE. In summary, ALS NFE and INFED program can continue to unlock the capabilities of OSYAs, prepare them for further education, career, and employment, and ultimately improving their current livelihoods to contribute to national development. Firm commitment from all stakeholders, both private and public, is required for sustainable and thriving NFE and INFED program.

Recommendations

Nevertheless, the limitations presented in the preceding section may effectively be addressed with the following recommended actions:

1. The ALS teachers, policy-makers, and program implementers may consider the proposed NFE and INFED projects.
2. Boost private and public sector partnership and collaboration and strengthen advocacy and social mobilization efforts. Involve other stakeholders in crafting follow-through projects and activities for the OSYAs.
3. Adequate and carefully planned monitoring, follow-through, and evaluation of outcomes should be in place for the continuance of the NFE and INFED program, activities, and projects.

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