
**AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM-
EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING (ALS-EST) PROGRAM**

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the implementation of the Alternative Learning System- Education and Skills Training (ALS-EST) with the end view of knowing the learners' perspective as regards program implementation. The evaluation was focused on the learners' learning and reaction. Thirty-two learners enrolled in the program were purposively chosen as respondents. Data were obtained from the interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Subsequently, these data were analyzed following Braun and Clarke (2006) six-step stages for qualitative data analyses. Results revealed that academic preparations in the EST are a pivot to character formation, employment-related skills training, and academic skills. The program is well-received and viewed by its learners as an academic ladder and as a catalyst to a better life. Overall, as evaluated by the learners, EST, as an ALS program, is effectively implemented.

Keywords: Alternative Learning System, Education Skills Training, Program Evaluation

I.0 INTRODUCTION

The Education and Skills Training (EST) is one of the programs of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) designed to provide its program takers with both academic knowledge and technical competencies commensurate to employment standards. To carry out the program goal, the Department of Education (DepEd) through DO No. 46 s. 2017 institutionalized a framework for its implementation. The DO states that the education and skill training dimension of the program shall be provided through a partnership between the regular ALS learning facilitators and stakeholders with interest in the academe such as the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) of a Local Government Unit (LGU) where the program is offered.

One of the most recent developments in the ALS is its adoption of the Enhanced Alternative Learning System 2.0 (ALS 2.0) Curriculum. ALS 2.0 is regarded as an enhanced, strengthened, and expanded ALS. Among its salient features include the use of the K to 12 Curriculum used in the formal system. The use of the same curriculum is justified by a need to develop the 21st-century skills of the ALS learners which include advancement in information, media and technology, learning and innovation, communication, and life and career. ALS 2.0 has also adopted new key stages of learning equivalent to that of the formal basic education grade levelling. The curriculum likewise introduces six Learning Strands to

include: Communication Skills (English and Filipino streams), Scientific and Critical Thinking Skills, Mathematical and Problem-Solving Skills, Life and Career Skills, Understanding the Self and Society, and Digital Citizenship (DepEd Order 013 s. 2019).

Several empirical investigations have been undertaken involving the ALS. These studies were focused on the gains the enrollees have benefitted, concern on its curricular implementation, and those pertinent to technology-enriched programs. For example, Flores (2019) reported that for the young mothers in Cebu, earning an A&E certificate is a ticket to be able to enter the academic fences of either secondary or tertiary schools and even land a decent job. This has been corroborated by the research findings of a tracer study reported by Enriquez (2013) as it claimed that A&E program completers in the Division of Lucena City were able to get employment while a considerable proportion took up degrees in various institutions for higher learning. The program completers relegated this triumph to both the ALS curriculum as well as the instructional modalities employed by the programs implementers in the locality.

As regards to instruction and learning process, Labarrete (2019) assessed the reading and writing skills of a group of ALS learners in a single district learning center in a town in Leyte. For the former, the researcher reported that learners enrolled in the program generally find skills pertinent to reading specifically on inferencing, evaluating, creating, outlining, and semantic mapping challenging as challenging. The assessment for the latter, on the other hand, concentrated on how it is taught, the learners' ability to express ideas in written format, and the programs implementers and learners' concerns about its implementation. Findings revealed that while its current pedagogic practices remain commendable, there is still a need to adopt novel measures such as the principles contained in the scaffolding theory and that of the Outcomes-Based Teaching and Learning to effect change in the learners' performance of this macro language skill in the classroom and beyond. The researcher recommended that pedagogic practices for both be revisited. Finally, on technology-enriched programs, the Melgar (2019) twins both developed an Online DepEd-based ALS Programs for the A&E learners in Cebu City. These programs were focused on the six Learning Strands (LS) of the new ALS K to 12 Curriculum. The first program concentrated on Scientific and Critical Thinking Skills, Mathematics and Problem Solving Skills, and Digital Literacy while the other was focused on Communication Skills, Life and Career Skills, and Understanding Self and Society. Reports of the findings of their studies said that learners and learning facilitators rated both programs as technically well-done, user friendly, practical, and responsive to the learners' needs. It was thus recommended that these be utilized

The literature mentioned and discussed above suggests that while empirical undertakings about the ALS abound, none is a pivot to evaluating program effectiveness such as that of the EST. Given this, it is thus imperative to pursue an academic undertaking along this dimension. This study then evaluates the implementation of the ALS-EST program through the learners' reaction and learning. The learners' evaluation is anchored on Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Model. The evaluation, however, only covered the first and second criteria or the reaction (level 1) and learning (level 2) respectively. Kirkpatrick (2007) described the former as gauging the participants' reaction to the training provided while the latter on the depth of the participants learning.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 Sampling

This study used a narrative inquiry design. Narrative inquiry is focused on understanding and making meaning of experience that can be achieved through conversations, dialogue, and participation in the ongoing lives of research participants as media of obtaining field texts. It emphasizes relational engagement between the researcher and identified informants. As to its process, this design requires field participation, creating field texts, and narrating both interim and final research texts. In this study, listening to individuals tell their stories using the methods interviews as conversations and discussions with the groups were employed as starting point of the inquiry (Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods, 2008 pp 541-543).

Thirty-two EST learners enrolled in ALS Learning Center in San Miguel, Leyte for the academic year 2018-2019 were purposively chosen as key informants. These learners were under the tutelage of a single ALS program implementer who enjoys a Master Teacher 1 academic rank for their academic preparations. Their skills training is provided by another regular ALS program implementer and several other skills trainers from the Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA). Among the skills training, these informants are enrolled with include Welding NC II-Electrical Installation and Maintenance, NCII Cookery and Baking, and NCII Food and Beverages.

2.2 Data Collection procedure and analyzes

Data in this study were collected and analyzed based on the six-step stages for qualitative data analyses suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, immersing oneself in the data. Video recorded interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were repeatedly played to get an in-depth and holistic perspective as regards learners' reactions and learnings on the implementation of the EST program. These were done for initial code generation and determine codes and patterns. Dominant codes were noted for further analyses. Second, generating initial codes. Several initial codes were generated taken from the meanings and patterns based on the video recorded interviews and FGDs conducted involving the EST learners. Third, searching for themes. All themes that have emerged thrice from the codes generated in the second stage were taken as a theme. Fourth, Reviewing themes. The themes listed in the third stage were further filtered, reviewed, and eventually refined to ensure that clear and coherent data within themes and distinct boundaries between them are met. Then, Defining and naming themes. The focal idea of each of the themes included was identified, named, and discussed. Finally, findings from the analyses made were reported.

2.3 Ethical considerations

Consent of the key informants for this study was sought and that the nature and purpose of the study were deliberately explained. They were also assured of data confidentiality.

3.0. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Research Question 1: Learners' learning on the implementation of the EST program

The key informants for this study were asked this question: What have you learned from attending the ALS-EST program? (Anu-anu iyo mga nahibaruan ha pag tambung hinin ALS-EST? Just like the first question, this also intend to elicit information on their learning from enrolling or attending the ALS-EST program.

Results of the findings from the analyses made on the various interview statements relative to the learnings as echoed by the ALS-EST program takers can be thematized into three. **Theme One: Values and Character Formation.** This theme points the learners' values and character formation. One of the many commendable characters capitalized by the respondents is respect. This value learned is invariably extended to that of their fellow learners and other people in the community in general. It is imminent from their testimonies that their enrollment and attendance to the ALS did contribute immensely towards the acquisition of this trait. The informants claimed that through the ALS, they have gradually acquired this value over time. Below are some of the interview statements of the key informants supporting this theme.

Accordingly, respect, as claimed by the respondents, naturally surfaced and had since served as a group mantra. This is so as it is among the group common realization of the similarities of their life-stories that they have gone through in their lives which had ultimately put them in the same learning environment.

The development of the learners' religious value, on the other hand, is strongly tied to the class practice of reciting a short prayer before the actual recital of lessons. As observed, this practice is conducted across groups. As an embedded practice in the lesson episodes, a member of the class is pre-assigned to lead the prayer. No member of the class is spared from not leading the prayer. Undeniably, this practice must have formed a solid rock foundation for their being prayer oriented individuals. This value has resulted in the development of another trait, which they call as being "mapainubsanun" or humility. All ALS program implementers can attest to this reality as well. They are in unison in saying that their learners are all "buotan" or well mannered. The series of testimonies below support this theme.

"Maupay an ALS nga EST kay dinhi ako nahibaro hin pagtahod han akon kalugaringon, sugad man han akon mga classmates, mga kag-anak, ngan han akon mga paryente han luyo han akon Tatay ngan Nanay. Damo na salamat sir hin pagtutdo hin maupay na pamatasan ha amon na tanan" [ALS-EST is good because it served as an avenue for me to learn respect for myself, my classmates, my parents, as well as my relatives in both my father and mother side. Thank you very much sir for teaching good values to all of us] (Respondent1).

"Maupay an ALS program kay an sugad ha akon nga diri na nag dadahom nga maka skwela pa. Salit yana na natagan ako hin higayon magtatapos ako hini dinhi. Ako gihap may mga pangarap ko gihap, bisan kun sugad la ako hini nga pag katawo- gusto ko makapag tapos hin pag skwela. Tungod han ALS nahibaro ako hin importansiya hit pag bulig hit akon ig kasi tawo, nagkamayada ako paninindigan, ngan napaharani na ako han aton makagarahum" [ALS program is good especially to all those who like me had lost hope to be able to go back to school. Now, that I am here, I will make sure to be able to finish. I also have a dream even if I

am just like this type of person. Because of the ALS, I learned the importance of values such as helping my fellow, to be courageous, and, I become closer to GOD] (Respondent 10).

“Damo nga salamat nga may ada ALS. Damo gud an akon nahibaruan hini dinhi. Primiro na hini an pagiging disiplinado ha kalugaringon. An una waray waray la ha akon kun sumulod o deri salit gin hulog ako ni Maam han nakadto pa ako ha formal. Dako ini na ALS na bulig sugad ha akon na nag undang pag eskwela hin pira ka anyos nga naka pag asawa ngan nag kaanak anay ngan naruyag na liwat pag balik pag eskwela”. [I am very thankful that there is ALS. I have learned a lot from ALS. Primary of which is by having self-discipline. In the past, going to school or not going to school was never an issue to me that's why my teacher in the formal school gave failed me. ALS is a really big help to all those who like me had quit attending school for several years, got married, bore a child, and eventually decided to go back to school.] (Respondent 3).

“I learned so good values and character education” (Respondent 11).

“I know how to behave and be polite Sir. I am already respectful not just to my classmates but also to my teachers and to my barkadas peers]. (Respondent 6).

Meanwhile, **Theme Two: Employment-Related Skills Trainings.** This theme relates to skills and livelihood training. It refers to the many skills the learners have acquired that they can ultimately use to earn a living, showcase during Portfolio Day, and present as a portfolio in eventualities that they decide to take the Accreditation and Equivalency Test. This theme extends across groups and programs. All their narratives hail to having learned specific skills and getting training on trade-related activities. This type of learning varies in focus.

For the OSYs enrolled in the EST program, skills and livelihood training is spearheaded by the personnel and trainers from the Technical Education and Skills Authority (TESDA). This is so as Leyte Division has inked a Memorandum of Agreement with the agency in consonance to the DepEd's order from the National Office. In effect, TESDA trains the OSY learners enrolled in the ALS-EST program. The training is conducted every Saturday and Sunday. The National Certificate II for Electrical Installation and Maintenance, Welding, Cookery and Baking, and Food and Beverages are among the skills and livelihood training provided to them. On top of this, however, regular ALS teachers also provide related skills and training activities as it is a core subject that falls under Learning Strand 4 or the Life and Career Skills. The training provided to them is concentrated on handicraft making. In the ALS, this activity is dubbed Informal Education (InFed). Below are some of the vignettes pertinent to these learnings:

“Deri gud magmamahay in usa ka OSY sugad ha akon kun mag enroll ha ALS. Damo gud hin duro an iya matutun an. Parehas ha akon nahibaro ako hin damo na skills na pwede magamit ko kun maka graduate na ako ngan mag desidir na mag apply hin pag trabaho. Yana pala ngani nakag extra na ako pag service ngan naka income na ako kay gin uupod ako hit license na electrician kun nananaud hiya mga wirings hit iba iba na panimalay dinhi ha amon munisipyo. Tungod han ALS nag kamay ada ako NC II han Electrical Installation and Maintenance. Ini na tanan libre la nakun na natun an ha ALS-EST. Salamat hin madamo hin pag hatag ha akon hin higayon na mag ka may ada sugad hini nga skills.” [An OSY like me will never regret to enroll in ALS. The enrollee will learn some things. In my case, I learned a

lot of skills that I can use to apply for a job upon program completion. By now, I already earn from doing an extra job as a helper to a licensed electrician whenever he is called for to install electrical wirings in the different household here in our town. I am very thankful to the ALS because I earned NC II for Electrical Installation and Maintenance for free. Thank you so much for allowing me to be an NC II certified and acquire these skills.] (Respondent 16).

“Nagpapasalamat ako hin duro ha ALS kay naging NC II holder ako ha Welding. Waray na gud ako mag dadahum na magiging NCII holder ako hini kay maiha na nga panahon na waray ako mag eskwela. Salit para han ig kasi ko OSY, balik na kamu pag eskwela. Dako akon pagtapod na ako magkaka may ada nan trabaho kun mahuman ko na ini na ALS. Salamat han tanan na akon maestra. Diyos an magbalos ha iyo.” [I am immensely grateful to the ALS because I became an NCII holder in Welding. It never crossed my mind that I will earn this certification because I had left school for a long period. I am therefore encouraging my fellow OSY to go back to school and enroll in ALS. I am extremely confident that I can get a job after graduation from the ALS. Thank you to all my teachers. God Bless You All.] (Respondent 17).

“Igin paparayaw ko hit ngatanan na ako naka enroll ha ALS kay nagkakuha ako hin NC II han Cookery ngan Baking. Yana dako nagud it akon higayon na karawaton hit trabaho kay mayda naman ako ig papakita na skill hit akon pag aaplayan. Salamat kay libre la gud ini nga tanan. Dekalidad na Edukasyon pa gud. Salamat han akon mga magtuturdo” [I take pride to all that I am an ALS learner because I can earn an NC II in Cookery and Baking. Now, I know that I have a good chance of landing a job related to my skill as I have something to present to my employer. Thank you so much because I have gotten all these for free. It is even a quality education. Thank you to all my teachers.] (Respondent 18).

“Nakakatuok ako hin kalipay kay tungod han pag enroll ko ha ALS nah ka may ada ako NC II ha Food and Beverages. Salamat hin madamo na nahitagan ako hin higayon para maka enroll hini nga programa. Ha tinuud la nga istorya, naka income na ako yana kay gin kukuha ako na waiter hin usa na dako catering service dinhi hini namon lugar. Salamat gud ALS ngan han akon mga magtuturdo. Hinaot unta na ini magpadayon para damo pan mabuligan na mga OSY parehas ha akon. Salamat. Salamat.” [I am in tears of joy because when I enrolled in ALS, I earned an NC II in Food and Beverages. Thank you so much for allowing me to be able to enroll in this program. Actually, by now I already earn because I am invited by the owner of a big catering service in our town to serve as a waiter in some occasions. Thank you so much for the ALS and to all my teachers. I hope that this program will be sustained so that more OSY learners like me will benefit from this. Thank you. Thank you.] (Respondent 21).

“Aminado po ako na mahina ako sa pagbabasa mapa Ingles man o di kaya ay Filipino. Nung ako ay nagsimula nang mag-aral dito sa ALS, masasabi ko na nadagdagan ng husto ang aking kaalaman sa pagbabasa. Lubos po akong nagpapasalamat sa aking mga naging guro dito sa ALS dahil mulin kung napatunayan na hindi pa huli ang halat sa mga OSY na tulad ko. Maari pa din makabasa kahit na matagal nang nahinto sa pag-aaral. Salamat po sa ALS.” [I admit the fact that I am a poor reader in both English and Filipino texts. However, when I started studying here in ALS, I can ascertain that my knowledge of reading has increased. I am extremely grateful to all my ALS teachers because they made me realized that an OSY like

me should never consider quitting school a hindrance to my desire to improve my reading competence. Thank you so much to the ALS.] (Respondent 31).

“Magaling po magturo ang aming guro sa ALS. Noon hindi talaga ako intersado sa asignaturang reading kasi ito ay nakakatamad. Pero simula nang akoy nag ka interes sa asignaturang ito, ako ay naging mahusay na magbasa sa tulong na din nga aking guro. Salamat Sir. Natuto din ako sa asignaturang Math lalo na sa Algebra. Salamat po.” [Our teacher in ALS is good. Way back, I hate reading subject because I find them very boring subject. I became interested in it, however, I became an avid reader of course with the help of our teacher. Thank you. I also learned Math subjects, especially Algebra. Thank you.] (Respondent 12).

Finally, **Theme 3: Academic Skills**. The volume of testimonies of the ALS learners across groups points to the academic skills. In this context, academic is equated to reading, writing, and numeracy skills. Below are some of their narratives:

“Aminado po ako na mahina ako sa pagbabasa mapa Ingles man o di kaya ay

Filipino. Nung ako ay nagsimula nang mag-aral dito sa ALS, masasabi ko na nadagdagan ng husto ang aking kaalaman sa pagbabasa. Lubos po akong nagpapasalamat sa aking mga naging guro dito sa ALS dahil mulin kung napatunayan na hindi pa huli ang halat sa mga OSY na tulad ko. Maari pa din makabasa kahit na matagal nang nahinto sa pag-aaral. Salamat po sa ALS.” [I admit the fact that I am a poor reader in both English and Filipino texts. However, when I started studying here in ALS, I can ascertain that my knowledge of reading has increased. I am extremely grateful to all my ALS teachers because they made me realized that an OSY like me should never consider quitting school a hindrance to my desire to improve my reading competence. Thank you so much to the ALS.] (Respondent 11).

“Magaling po magturo ang aming guro sa ALS. Noon hindi talaga ako intersado sa asignaturang reading kasi ito ay nakakatamad. Pero simula nang akoy nag ka interes sa asignaturang ito, ako ay naging mahusay na magbasa sa tulong na din nga aking guro. Salamat Sir. Natuto din ako sa asignaturang Math lalo na sa Algebra. Salamat po.” [Our teacher in ALS is good. Way back, I hate reading a subject because I find it a very boring subject. I became interested in it, however, I became an avid reader of course with the help of our teacher. Thank you. I also learned Math subjects, especially Algebra. Thank you.] (Respondent 2).

“Nung una bali wala lang sa akin ang pag aaral. Ngayon na nandito ako sa facility, mas lalo po akong naging motivated sa pag aaral lalo na kasi magaling ang aking guro sa pagtuturo ng aming reading subject, math subject, at formal theme writing. Salamat po!” [I am more motivated to study in ALS now than when I was still in formal school because my teachers here are good at teaching reading, math, and theme writing. Thank you.] (Respondent 10).

“Naayun ako hit amon Math subject marisyo hiya ngan deri na makuri intindihon. Salamat Sir.” [I like our math subject because it is no longer difficult to understand. Thank you Sir.] (Respondent 8).

“Yana deri na ako nakukurian hin duro hit math na subject kay tutduan kami pamaagi hin pag solve hit number problem han amon ALS teacher nga sinisiring na technique na GEMDAS or Groupings, Exponent, Multiplication, Division, Addition, and Subtraction ngan PEMDAS or Parenthesis, Exponent, Multiplication, Division, Addition, and Subtraction.” [Now, I don’t find math as a very difficult subject because our ALS teacher taught us the technique called GEMDAS or Groupings, Exponent, Multiplication, Division, Addition, and Subtraction ngan PEMDAS or Parenthesis, Exponent, Multiplication, Division, Addition, and Subtraction]. (Respondent 9).

Research Question 2: Learners' reaction to the implementation of the EST program.

The key informants for this study, the ALS-EST learners, were asked this question: What can you say about the implementation of the ALS-EST program? (Anu an iyo masisiring han pag implementar han ALS-EST? Just like the first question, this also intend to elicit data pertinent to their reaction as regards ALS-EST program implementation. Results of the findings from the analyses made on the various interview statements they narrated resulted in the generation of the following themes: **Theme 1. Academic Ladder.** To the ALS-EST, the ALS serves as a ladder to get back to the academic grounds as it serves as a ticket towards earning a diploma and eventually land a decent job. A respondent said:

“Dako an bulig an ALS kay sugad han waray maka human pag eskla pwedi maka eskwela o maka padayun han pag high school tubtub ha college. Usa pa tanan han ira mga paamagi nga gin bubuhat hin pag tutdo haamon naayon lalo na kun nagamit hiran gadgets. Dako gayud in tabang ha akon na OSY ngan han akon mga classmates nga mga may edad na nga bumalik hin pan eskwela” [ALS is a big help to all those who have stopped studying. It paved the way for us to be able to continue our studies. Another thing is that I also like the approaches employed by our ALS teachers especially if they use different gadgets. It is a big help amongst us OSY learners as well as those classmates of mine whose ages are already advanced but have decided to go back to school to study] (Respondent 21).

Another theme generated from their interview statements is **Theme 2. A catalyst to a Better Life.** To the respondents, the ALS-EST program is seen as a catalyst to attain a better life as it liberated them from the stigma of being rejected to get a job due to under qualifications. Here are some of the interview statements as narrated by the informants:

“Dako an bulig an ALS kay sugad han waray maka human pag eskwela pwedi maka eskwela o maka padayun han pag high school tubtub ha college. Usa pa tanan han ira mga paamagi nga gin bubuhat hin pag tutdo haamon naayon lalo na kun nagamit hiran gadgets. Dako gayud in tabang ha akon na OSY ngan han akon mga classmates nga mga may edad na nga bumalik hin pan eskwela” [ALS is a big help to all those who have stopped studying. It paved the way for us to be able to continue our studies. Another thing is that I also like the approaches employed by our ALS teachers especially if they use different gadgets. It is a big help amongst us OSY learners as well as those classmates of mine whose ages are already advanced but have decided to go back to school to study] (Respondent 3).

“Maupay hiya para han nga tanan na waray nakapag tapos hin pag eskwela. Damo it mga program namag upay sugad hit mga activities para han mga sugad ha akon nga diri na

nagdadahom na makaka balik pa hin pag eskwela. Malipayon akon duron nganhi dinhi ha ALS kay maupay pamaagi pag tutdo. damo it amon nababaroan na mga dikalidad la nga mga trabahoon labi na kay an ira pamaagi han pag tutdo sugad hin tutorial ngan baga la gihap hin normal na pan eskwelahan an maupay gud hin duro kay na fofocusan kami”. [ALS is a good program for all those who were unable to finish their studies. It has several good programs that are given to all those who were once hopeless to be able to finish their studies. I am very happy here at ALS because the way they teach us is good. They give us activities in which we are compelled to participate. In ALS, a learner will learn a lot because the manner of teaching like the tutorial is similar to that of a regular teaching approach provided in a formal school. This approach is effective because we feel like being given a hundred percent focus by the teacher.] (Respondent 17).

“Marisyo hin duro nganhi ha ALS lalo na kun nakita na ako han amun maestro nga na haw as hit iya motor ngan na atubang na ha amon classroom kay ini sinyales na mayda na liwat kami bag-o na mababaruan tikang han amon makarit na maestro. Dako akon pasalamat na nagsasakripisyo gud hiya pag kanhi hini namon lugar bisan harayo kami ha bungto. An iya gin bubuhat na pag atubang ha amon hn pag hatag hin leksyon in maupay gud kay baga la kami hin aadto gihap hin formal na eskwelahan parehas hin mga nasulod na ig kasi namon mga estudyante pa dinhi hinin amonn sitio”. [I am very happy here in ALS especially if I see our teacher going down on his motorcycle and already face us in the classroom because it signals the beginning for new learning on our part. I am very thankful to our teacher for sacrificing a lot just so that I together with my classmates will be able to gain new knowledge knowing that our place is far from the town proper. The way that he teaches us in a face-to-face manner makes us feel that we are just studying in a formal school just like the other learners in our sitio.] (Respondent 4).

“Dako gud na pabor an ALS hin para hin sugad ha akon na OSY ngan nanay na pero gin bulagan hin asawa. Malipay ako hin duro kay yana kola na tanto na mas maupay ngay an naka eskwela. Salit naruruyag ako hit gin bubuhat hit amon maestro na hiya napakanhi amon center nga na atubang pag tutdo amon kay feeling ko bagan aada la gihap ako ha formal school” [ALS is a big favor to all OSYs especially those who are single parents like me because I now realized the importance of education. I am happy that or teacher always reports to the center and face us because I feel like I am just studying in a formal school] (Respondent 8).

“Malaking pabor po sa amin an ALS sa mga tulad naming OSYs. Masaya po ako sapagkat ngayon nakapasok na nman ako sa eskwela. Gustong gusto kop o ang ginagawang aming teacher na pumupunta siya sa center para turuan kami” [ALS is favorable to the OSY and at the same time single mother like me. I am grateful because I just realized now the value of being educated. So, I am in favor in the way our teacher teaches us by coming to the center]. (Respondent 5).

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

Results of the findings suggest that ALS-EST learners' learnings are a pivot to values and character formation, employment-related skills training, and academic skills. These learnings represent a specific Learning Strand (LS) in the current ALS K to 12 Basic Education

Curriculum. Character formation can be relegated to LS 5-Understanding the Self and Society. This strand teaches the learners Filipino traits and values, religions, and pressing social or civic issues. Having it surfaced as one of the learnings proved that the EST implementer capitalizes the teaching of values formation and allied activities. Its attached dimension, that is, society, though, was left unwritten as among their learnings.

Additionally, the emergence of skills and livelihood training as other learnings also showed that LS 4- Life and Career Skills as among the six learning strands is also addressed. This is materialized through the various activities conducted in their Informal Education (InFed). Finally, the inclusion of literacy as another learning has a strong correlation to the teachings of LS1-Communication Skills (English and Filipino) and LS 3-Mathematical and Problem Solving Skills. These LSs laid forth the academic foundation of the respondents. Noteworthy, however, is the exclusion of LS6-Digital Citizenship respectively. Its exclusion proves a need to address an array of issues concerning the teaching of this strand. This signals a need for the DepEd to revisit its infrastructure investment relating to technology-related resources, programs implementers training on the use of educational technologies, conditions of the instructional rooms, availability of laboratories by which learners can learn technology, among others.

As regards learners' reactions, the ALS-EST learners, the respondents of this study, wholeheartedly welcome the program as they perceive it as an academic ladder and as a catalyst to a better life. These perspectives are suggestive of the fact that the implementation of the EST made them a) feel their worth as valued members of the society wanting to acquire new knowledge and learn new skills; b) showcase to the various education stakeholders of their innate talents; c) encourage those, who, like them, had gone through a dark stage in their lives that made them hopeless to gain an education; and d) enjoy the fundamental right to education as a social service provided by the government channeled through the Department of Education (DepEd) and partner agencies.

This welcoming reaction and overarching learnings reported by the ALS learners across groups though could have alluded as positive gains on the grounds of the government's efforts to deliver and make education accessible to all those who are out of the school grounds. These gains further echoed the fact that the fundamental right to education to all is reached and in fruition. The DepEd then needs to sustain these gains and satisfactory remarks and even further strengthen the implementation of the program. One of several ways to do this is to expand the agency's partnership with various NGOs, LGUs, the private sector, and similar stakeholders with interest in the academe. Collaborating with these stakeholders would surely further create an osmosis of opportunity for these learners who were forced to leave schools for reasons beyond their control.

5.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concentrated on a single ALS learning centre implementing the EST program. Its learners served as the key informants. It thus generated limited data. As such, to get a more comprehensive picture as regards students learning and reactions pertinent to the implementation of the EST, it is thus recommended that a parallel study involving other ALS students enrolled in the same program and studying in other centres be conducted. In this way, large data will be gathered, and, in turn, a more holistic picture relative to the EST

program implementation may be generated. Nonetheless, findings from this study though may serve as baseline information useful for policy direction for the implementation of the EST as one of the programs offered in the ALS.

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