



The Implementation of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in Butuan City: A Mixed-Method Study on the Successes and Gaps as the Basis for the Sustainability Framework

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the implementation of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Junior High School Program in Butuan City from 2018 to 2024. Using mixed methods, data were gathered from 260 respondents, including graduates, teachers, and coordinators. Findings show consistent program accomplishments, such as increased passers and senior high enrollees, yet graduation rates remained below targets, with many completers unemployed or unable to pursue further education.

Curriculum relevance was rated high, but instructional support, technological access, and exit opportunities were found lacking. Socio-economic challenges, limited facilities, and weak stakeholder engagement further hindered program outcomes. Despite these, success stories highlighted ALS's transformative potential. A sustainability framework is proposed to improve facilities, ensure post-graduation pathways, enhance teacher development, and strengthen monitoring systems. The study offers practical insights for improving ALS implementation and long-term impact.

Keywords: Alternative Learning System, Successes and Gaps, Sustainability Framework

1. INTRODUCTION

The illiteracy problem in the Philippines has been a longstanding challenge, particularly among marginalized groups, out-of-school youth, and adults who have not completed formal education. In 2019, the PSA reported that 6.2% of Filipinos aged 10 years old and above were illiterate. This figure represents millions of Filipinos who are excluded from the formal education system, many of whom lack even basic literacy skills (Celero et al., 2022).

Arguably, the Alternative Learning System (ALS) is a critical step in tackling the Philippines' illiteracy problem, which continues to be a major obstacle to the country's progress. For underserved populations, ALS offers an inclusive, adaptable, and easily accessible educational opportunity that supports lifelong learning, second-chance schooling, and literacy improvement (Jolly, 2022). ALS is essential to solving the literacy crisis and enabling people to make more meaningful contributions to society by filling in the gaps in the formal education system and reaching the most disadvantaged groups (Atilano et al., 2022).

The implementation of ALS is supported by Republic Act 11510, otherwise known as An Act Institutionalizing the Alternative Learning System in Basic Education for Out-of-School Children in Special Cases and Adults and Appropriating Funds Thereof, which was put into law on December 23, 2020. Its main goal was to provide educational opportunities for out-of-school youth and adults by offering an alternative formal education system that ensures the pursuit of basic education and skills training. In addition, DepEd Order 013 Series of 2019, or the policy guidelines on the implementation of enhanced Alternative Learning System (ALS) 2.0, was issued to ensure smooth and successful program implementation.

In spite of the previous efforts, a World Bank study indicates a low success rate of DepEd's ALS program. This was reported in the press release of the Philippine Institute of Developmental Studies (PIDS, 2018), where Takiko Igarashi, one of the authors of a World Bank report on the Philippines' ALS, noted the low participation and passing rates in the ALS, which she said are indications that the program is "not fully effective." According to Igarashi, there are around 6.6 million potential enrollees aged 15-30 in the ALS program. However, she noted that less than 10 percent of this number, or only about .6 million, were enrolled in the program in 2017. She further noted that of those who initially enrolled, only 60 percent attended classes regularly, and only about 20 percent eventually passed the A&E exams.

Like in many parts of the country, ALS was implemented in Butuan City following the practices of non-formal education programs that are launched in remote and far-flung areas. The program has grown through the years and has expanded through partnerships with local government units, NGOs, and

community organizations, enhancing accessibility and outreach. The focus has been on empowering learners, improving their livelihoods, and fostering community development.

The implementation of ALS continues in almost all barangays of the city. It has grown into two (2) relevant programs, namely the Academic-Focused Bridging Programs that refer to ALS programs that provide continuing learning opportunities to accreditation and equivalency secondary-level test passers who wish to better prepare for the academic demands and study skills requirements of tertiary-level education or post-secondary vocational training, or both. Second is the Accreditation and Equivalency Program (A&E Program), which refers to a program in ALS aimed at providing an alternative pathway of learning for out-of-school children in special cases and adults who have not completed basic education. The school dropouts can complete elementary and secondary education outside the formal school system through the program.

Over the years of experience as an ALS coordinator in Butuan City, the proponent finds it timely to conduct a comprehensive research study that will answer the question: Where are we now in the implementation of ALS? Relative to the existing literature, few studies have been made related to ALS, which has made the whole stakeholder community unaware of the actual status of ALS in terms of completers' exits, areas needing improvements, real-time monitoring, and a sustainability framework. Beyond a tracer study, this paper sought to understand the gaps and successes in the implementation of the junior high school ALS program in Butuan City.

1.1 Research Questions

This study unfolded the gaps and successes in the implementation of the Accreditation & Equivalency (A&E) Junior High School ALS program in Butuan City. Specifically, this research sought answers to the following questions.

1. What are the accomplishments of ALS relative to its mandated targets in the last seven (7) years?
2. What is the exit status of ALS Accreditation & Equivalency (A&E) Junior High School learners who graduated from the program in the last seven (7) years?
3. What is the perception of the coordinators and teachers of the following dimensions of the ALS program implementation;
 - 3.1. Curriculum relevance;
 - 3.2. instructional support;
 - 3.3. availability of facilities;
 - 3.4. stakeholders' support and involvement; and
 - 3.5. Opportunities for completers?
4. What are the challenges experienced by the coordinators, teachers, and graduates along with the implementation of ALS in the Division of Butuan City?
5. What are the success stories experienced by the graduates after completing ALS?
6. Based on the findings of the study, what sustainability framework can be developed to ensure long-term implementation of ALS?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a concurrent mixed-method approach to research as it collected both quantitative and qualitative data. It was concurrent because the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative evidence simultaneously. In this approach, the researcher gathered numerical data through structured methods like surveys or experiments while also collecting non-numerical data through open-ended methods such as interviews, observations, or focus groups. The goal was to integrate these different types of data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. By collecting both forms of data at the same time, the researchers could explore complex issues from multiple perspectives, which enhanced the depth and breadth of the study.

Moreover, one of the key advantages of a concurrent mixed-method approach was that it allowed researchers to triangulate data or compare and contrast findings from the qualitative and quantitative strands. This could increase the validity of the results, as patterns that emerged from one method could be tested and validated through the other. Additionally, the simultaneous collection of data could be time-efficient, as both types of data were gathered during the same phase of the research process.

In the context of this study, a concurrent approach was deemed appropriate since qualitative data could be collected without necessarily considering the prior results from quantitative data. This meant that both the survey and interviews could be done within a similar time frame, and data triangulation was the main technique for finding similarities and differences in the findings.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents

Year of Completion	Number of Graduates	Sample Size Based on Slovin	Actual number of responses
2018	610	47	20
2019	640	49	22
2020	520	40	25
2021	546	42	26
2022	875	67	52
2023	795	61	55
2024	854	65	60
Total	4840	369	260

2.2 Research Respondents

The respondents of the study included ALS graduates in Butuan City Division, under the Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) for junior high school, from 2018 to 2024, ALS teachers, and District ALS coordinators. For the interview portion, ten (10) ALS graduates, ten (10) teachers, and ten (10) ALS coordinators were selected. Table 1 specifically shows the distribution of respondents. The sample size was computed using Slovin's formula

2.3 Research Instrument

Researcher-made questionnaires were used in the study. A five-point Likert survey instrument was designed to measure the perception of the ALS coordinators and teachers of the following dimensions of program implementation: curriculum relevance, support to instruction, availability of facilities, stakeholders' support and involvement, and opportunities for completers. Guide questions were also used to capture the challenges experienced by these ALS coordinators and teachers when it comes to the implementation of ALS. Furthermore, some data, particularly the profile data, was used and reflected in the dashboard.

ALS completers have been provided with survey questionnaires that intend to capture their exit status immediately after completing the program, as well as their current socioeconomic status. In addition, guide questions were also prepared and translated into Cebuano or Bisaya for an interview with these completers. All parts of the questionnaire were sent to at least three (3) experts for content and face-value validity. A reliability test using Cronbach's alpha with 0.70 or above was used to ensure the internal consistency of items used in the Likert scale survey instrument.

2.4 Statistical Treatment

To treat the data that were collected after complying with the steps in the data gathering section, the following techniques of analysis were employed.

Frequency and Percentage Distribution. These descriptive formulas were used to describe the accomplishments of ALS relative to its mandated targets in the last seven (7) years and the exit status of ALS completers. It was particularly used to answer problems 1 and 2.

Mean and Standard Deviation. These measures of center and variation were used to describe the perception of the ALS coordinators and teachers to the following dimensions of the implementation of ALS: curriculum relevance, instructional support, availability of facilities, stakeholders' support and involvement, and opportunities for completers. Specifically, these formulas were used to answer problem 3.

Thematic Analysis. This commonly used technique for qualitative data analysis was used to extract relevant themes from the actual statements of the respondents. This was used to answer problems 4 and 5. Moreover, thematic analysis was guided by the procedure suggested by Clarke and Braun (2017). These are discussed as follows.

1st step: Familiarization with the data: Researchers immerse themselves in the data by reading and re-reading it, making initial notes about potential patterns or ideas.

2nd step: Generating initial codes: Researchers systematically go through the data and code segments that are relevant to the research question. These codes are essentially labels that identify features of the data that may form themes later.

3rd step: Searching for themes: After coding, researchers begin to group codes into potential themes. This involves reviewing the data to identify broader patterns and organizing the codes into coherent themes that capture significant aspects of the data.

4th step: Reviewing themes: Researchers refine the themes by checking them against the dataset. They may collapse, split, or discard themes depending on whether they accurately reflect the data.

5th step: Defining and naming themes: In this phase, researchers define what each theme represents and name them clearly. The goal is to articulate what each theme captures in relation to the research question.

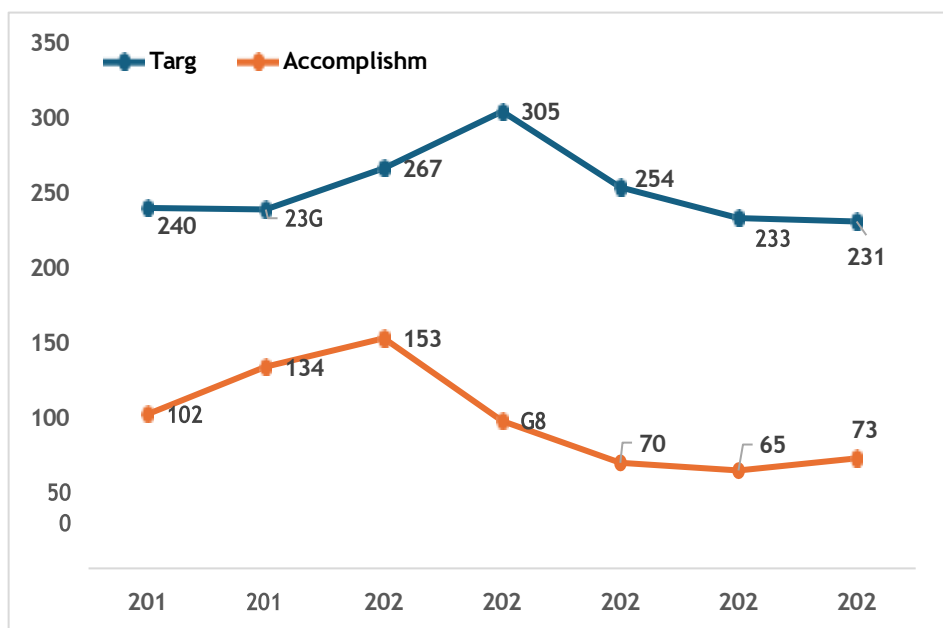
6th step: Writing the report: Finally, researchers write up the analysis, weaving together the themes with direct examples from the data. The report presents a coherent narrative of the findings, interpreting the themes in relation to the research questions and existing literature

3. Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the results based on the data gathered. Relevant findings are presented according to the sequence of problem statements.

1. What are the accomplishments of ALS Accreditation & Equivalency (A&E) Junior High School relative to its mandated targets in the last seven (7) years?

The major accomplishment of the A&E junior high school ALS program is generally determined based on its number relative to the mandated target within a particular year. Figure 3 unfolds the realistic situation of the program's accomplishments from 2018 to 2024. The orange line represents the actual number, while the line plot in blue corresponds to the target per mandate of the Butuan City Division. Source: ALS CENTRO , <https://shorturl.at/q6NQ>



Source: ALS CENTRO , <https://shorturl.at/q6NQ>

Figure 3 shows that the number of ALS Junior High School graduates has consistently fallen short of targets since 2018. Only 1,029 out of 2,407 expected enrollees graduated in 2018 (43%). Although slight improvements were seen in 2019 (56%) and 2020 (58%), a downward trend followed during the pandemic years: 32% in 2021, 28% in 2022 and 2023, and 32% in 2024. This pattern highlights the challenges of reaching 100% graduation. As an ALS coordinator for over five years, the proponent observes that meeting the annual target of 75 graduates per coordinator remains difficult. High pre-pandemic graduation rates declined sharply during the pandemic due to reduced motivation and increased hardships in communities.

Several factors contribute to the low graduation rates. Socioeconomic barriers, particularly poverty, force learners to balance work and study, often at the cost of completing the program (Bacal & Ormilla, 2021). Accessibility issues also persist, especially in rural areas lacking resources, trained educators, and technology (Abel, 2024). Furthermore, systemic limitations such as inconsistent implementation and assessment methods discourage learners and lead to higher dropout rates (Reyes & Carbaja, 2023). Seamless transition from ALS to formal education pathways further hinders students' motivation to complete the program, as many may not see the value or feasibility of continuing their educational journey beyond ALS.

Table 2 below represents the highlights of the Junior High School ALS program's accomplishments in the last seven years. The efforts and investment of the program personnel have resulted in several successes despite the challenges and relatively low graduation rates, considering the expected targets.

Table 2. Accomplishments of Accreditation & Equivalency (A&E) Junior High School ALS program from 2018-2024

Year	Highlights of the Accomplishments
2018	Produced 1029 A&E- junior high school passers, Hired 57 LSB-funded Community ALS Implementers / Literacy Teachers, and Conducted Division Mass Training of ALS Implementation on the Utilization of Enhanced ALS Curriculum and Learning Materials. Feb-26-28, 2018.
2019	Produced 1346 A&E Junior High School passers. Opened 86 courses for the ALS Literacy cum Livelihood program.
2020	National Literacy Awards 2020 National Champion, ALS became institutionalized on December 21, 2020 (RA.11510), Produced 1537 A&E Junior High School passers,
2021	Produced 985 A&E- Junior High School Passers, Opened A&E classes in different sectors: Street Children, Children In Conflict With the Law (CICL), IP Learners, and BJMP (Persons Behind Bars)
2022	National Literacy Awards 2022 National Champion, Conducted Division ALS Barangayan and Festival of Talents in Butuan City, Oct. 11-12,2022, Conducted Division orientation in the implementation of ALS ACT 11510, and Produced 705 A&E passers.
2023	Mr. Amolo- ALS Teacher/ research proponent was awarded as CSC- Outstanding Government Employee 2023-PAGASA Award, Conducted Division Launching of ALS Senior High School Program Implementation as Pilot Division in Caraga Region - August 30, 2023, Conducted Division Training Workshop on the Implementation of the Essential Learning Competencies (MELC)- Based for ALS Senior High School Curriculum, Produced 654 A&E- JHS passers, Conducted division-wide completion program for the opened Skills Training and Livelihood Program and Conducted Inter-District Reading and Writing Proficiency Tests for ALS A&E- Learners.
2024	National Literacy Awards (2024). National Champion, Dec. 12, 2024, ALS-Education and Skills Training by Development Academy of the Philippines (ALS-EST, DAP) July 13, 2024, Mr. Amolo- ALS Teacher/ research proponent, was awarded as Bulawanong Sulo- Outstanding ALS Teacher, December 2, 2024, National Finalist as Outstanding ALS Community Learning Center- December 12, 2024, MOA signing between DepEd and Catholic Church of Alay Kapwa Community Schooling Program for ALS Senior High School implementation- August 16, 2024, and Produced 734 A&E- JHS passers

Source: ALS Butuan City Division Annual Accomplishment Reports, 2018-2024

Since 2018, the ALS program in Butuan City has achieved notable milestones. That year, 1,029 A&E junior high school passers were recorded, supported by 57 LSB-funded ALS teachers and division-wide training on the enhanced curriculum. In 2019, the program produced 1,346 passers and opened 86 literacy cum livelihood courses, earning recognition for the division. By 2020, it was named Champion in the National Literacy Awards.

In 2021, ALS expanded to reach street children and children in conflict with the law. The program continued to thrive, with more graduates and accolades. In 2024, ALS partnered with various agencies, and coordinator Mr. Amolo received the Bulawanong Sulo award. A major partnership with the Catholic Church for ALS SHS implementation was also formalized.

Despite these successes, the program still faces a major challenge: the consistent gap between actual graduation rates and annual targets, as shown in Figure 3.

2. What is the exit status of the ALS A&E-Junior High School learners who graduated from the program from 2018 to 2024?

The exit status of the ALS A&E- Junior High School learners is an essential measure of the continuity of the learning development and literacy of the completers. Hence, these exits must be monitored. Table 3 presents the Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Junior High School passers' exit status after finishing junior high school through ALS.

Table 3. *A&E- Junior High School Passers' Exit Status after Graduation*

Year of Completion	Pursue Senior High School	Running a business	Employed	Total
2018	17	3	0	20
2019	22	0	0	22
2020	15	0	10	25
2021	17	0	9	26
2022	33	7	12	52
2023	51	4	0	55
2024	45	7	8	60
Total	200	21	39	260

It can be observed from the given table that the majority of the A&E Junior High School graduates from 2018 to 2024 have pursued senior high school. This is supported by the percentage share of 77%, or 200 out of 260 sampled. Some of them have ventured into business, while others have decided to get employed immediately after completing junior high school through ALS. The statistical Figures presented in Table 3 reflect the choices of many in the Division of Butuan City.

The 2023–2024 ALS Butuan reports show that most A&E Junior High School graduates enrolled in Senior High School, prompting Butuan City to be selected as Caraga's pilot division for ALS SHS. This decision is driven by strong motivation from teachers and a desire to overcome past socio-economic challenges. Abel (2024) notes that ALS completers are eager to pursue education once denied to them. Lim and Chua (2020) highlight their drive for better job prospects through higher qualifications. De Vera (2021) adds that higher education leads to improved employment and wages, while Santos (2022) emphasizes the vital role of mentorship and peer support in encouraging continued education.

Table 4. *Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents Across Profile*

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
16-25 years	184	71%
26-35 years	56	22%
36-45 years	16	6%
46-55 years	4	2%
Total	260	100%
Sex		
Male	120	46%
Female	140	54%
Total	260	100%
Civil Status		
Single	220	85%
Married	40	15%
Total	260	100%

Educational Attainment

College Graduate	16	6%
College Level	16	6%
Junior High School Graduate	56	22%
Junior High School Level	36	14%
Senior High School Graduate	36	14%
Senior High School Level	100	38%
Total	260	100%

Table 4 presents the demographic profile of ALS A&E Junior High School graduates from 2018 to 2024. Most graduates (71%) are aged 16–25, indicating they are in their prime working years. Females make up 54% of respondents, with the majority being single—consistent with findings by Abad and Galleto (2020) that many ALS enrollees are out-of-school youth. In terms of education, 38% completed senior high school, and only 6% finished college. However, over half did not progress beyond junior high, highlighting the ALS program's limited long-term impact. Factors such as poverty, lack of support, and academic challenges continue to hinder ALS graduates from pursuing further education, as supported by Reyes et al. (2022).

Tracking the graduates' careers at present is another essential information regarding the long-term impact of JHS ALS program implementation, particularly when dealing with the efforts to fight against illiteracy and poverty. Figure 4 specifically shows the present career of the respondents according to the general exits of the program.

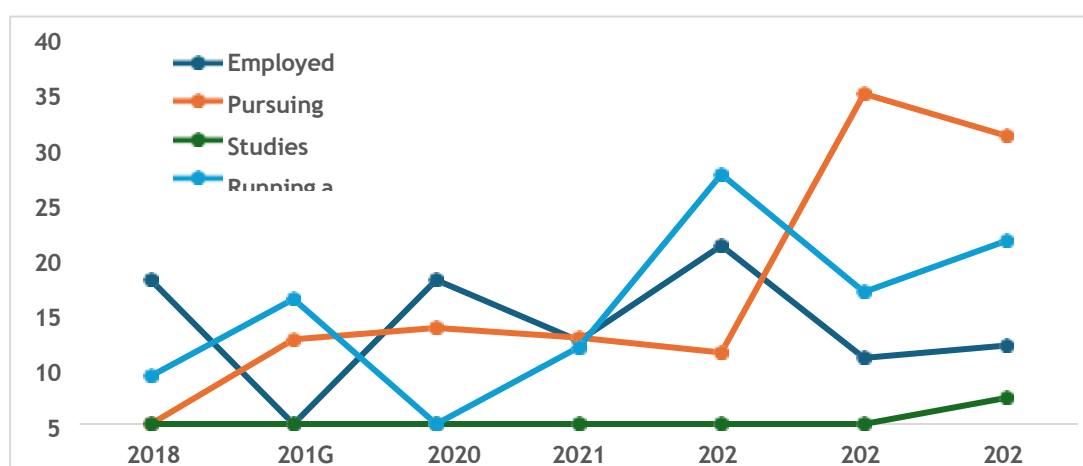


Figure 4. The present career of ALS A&E- Junior High School graduates from 2018 to 2024

The data categorizes ALS JHS graduates into four post-graduation paths: employment, further education, self-employment, and "none of the three." Most are still studying, consistent with earlier findings. Employment peaked in 2020 and 2022, while only a few pursued small businesses. A notable rise in the "none of the three" group in 2024 signals the need for stronger support systems, including career guidance and job readiness, to enhance the program's long-term impact on reducing illiteracy and poverty.

3. What is the perception of the coordinators and teachers to the following dimensions of the ALS program implementation: Curriculum relevance, Instructional Support, Availability of facilities, Stakeholders' support and involvement, and Opportunities for completers?

Table 5. Perception of the Coordinators and Teachers to the ALS Program Implementation in Terms of Curriculum Relevance

Items	Teachers	Level	Coordinators	Level
1. The curriculum of the ALS program aligns with the educational needs of the learners.	4.92	Very High	4.60	Very High
2. The ALS curriculum is designed to address the current societal challenges and issues.	4.83	Very High	4.10	High
3. The curriculum content is relevant to the life experiences of the learners.	4.83	Very High	4.30	Very High
4. The learning materials used in ALS are closely related to the real-world applications for the learners.	4.75	Very High	4.20	Very High
5. The topics covered in the ALS curriculum help learners gain practical skills they can use in their daily lives.	4.83	Very High	4.50	Very High
6. The ALS curriculum reflects the diverse learning needs of different learner groups.	4.75	Very High	4.50	Very High
7. The curriculum provides opportunities for learners to engage in community-based activities.	4.83	Very High	4.20	Very High
8. The ALS program allows flexibility to cater to the interests and aspirations of individual learners.	4.75	Very High	4.00	High
9. The ALS curriculum is updated regularly to remain relevant to changing trends in education and society.	4.75	Very High	4.10	High
10. The ALS curriculum supports the personal and professional development goals of the learners.	4.83	Very High	4.30	Very High
Overall	4.81	Very High	4.28	Very High

Note: Mean scores falling within 1.00-1.79: Very Low, 1.80-2.59: Low, 2.60-3.39: Average, 3.40-4.19: High, 4.20-5.00: Very High

Tables 5 and 6 show that both ALS teachers and coordinators rated the JHS ALS program's curriculum relevance as very high. Teachers gave the highest mean score (4.92) to the curriculum's alignment with learners' needs, while coordinators echoed this with a 4.60 mean. Both groups agreed that the curriculum is flexible, practical, and suited to learners' diverse backgrounds. These findings align with studies by Espejo et al. (2024) and Bacal & Ormilla (2021), which highlight the ALS curriculum's strength in addressing real-life skills and varied learner needs, making it effective and inclusive.

Table 6. Perception of the Coordinators and Teachers of the ALS Program Implementation in Terms of Instructional Support

Items	Teachers	Level	Coordinators	Level
1 The ALS program provides adequate instructional materials (e.g., books, worksheets, audiovisual tools) for effective learning.	3.40	Average	3.42	Average
2 Teachers in the ALS program are well-trained to deliver instructional content effectively.	3.50	High	3.49	High
3 The ALS program provides opportunities for learners to access additional learning resources outside of regular class time.	3.21	Average	3.35	Average

4	The ALS facilitators receive regular professional development to improve their teaching practices.	4.10	High	4.12	High
5	There is sufficient support for learners who need extra help to understand the instructional content.	3.35	Average	3.38	Average
6	The instructional methods used in ALS are diverse and cater to different learning styles (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic).	4.05	High	4.08	High
7	The learning environment in ALS is conducive to effective teaching and learning (e.g., quiet, well-equipped, comfortable).	1.89	Low	2.12	Low
8	The ALS program provides adequate technological support for learning, such as online resources or digital tools.	2.01	Low	2.21	Low
9	There is regular monitoring and feedback on the progress of learners in the ALS program.	3.01	Average	3.12	Average
10	Learners in the ALS program have access to mentoring or coaching to support their academic and personal growth.	2.80	Average	2.87	Average
	Overall	3.13	Average	3.22	Average

Note: Mean scores falling within 1.00-1.79: Very Low, 1.80-2.59: Low, 2.60-3.39: Average, 3.40-4.19: High, 4.20-5.00: Very High

Table 6 shows that both ALS teachers and coordinators rated the level of instructional support as average. They reported major challenges, particularly poor learning environments and limited access to technological tools, with low mean scores of 1.89 (teachers) and 2.12 (coordinators) for learning conditions. However, both groups acknowledged strong DepEd support for professional development, reflected in high ratings for training and teacher readiness. Overall means of 3.13 and 3.22 confirm an average implementation level. Supporting literature echoes these findings, citing resource gaps but also highlighting successful mobile teaching models and partnerships that enhance support in underserved areas.

Table 7. Perception of the Coordinators and Teachers to the ALS Program Implementation in Terms of Availability of Facilities

Items	Teachers	Level	Coordinators	Level	
The ALS program has adequate classroom space for all learners.					
1	2.40	Low	2.43	Low	
2	The learning facilities in ALS are clean and well-maintained.	2.72	Average	2.81	Average
3	The ALS program provides access to technology such as computers, the internet, or tablets for learning purposes.	1.69	Very Low	1.64	Very Low
4	The ALS classrooms are equipped with sufficient teaching aids (e.g., whiteboards, projectors, learning materials)	1.52	Very Low	1.61	Very Low
5	Learners have access to libraries or resource centers where they can study or borrow educational materials.	2.01	Low	2.14	Low
6	The ALS program provides comfortable and safe learning environments for all participants.	2.28	Low	2.19	Low
7	There are adequate sanitary facilities (e.g., restrooms) available for both learners and instructors.	2.32	Low	2.43	Low
8	The ALS program provides transportation or logistical support for learners to access the facilities.	2.25	Low	2.38	Low

9	The ALS learning spaces are accessible for learners with disabilities (e.g., ramps and special seating).	2.82	Average	3.02	Average
	1 The facilities available for the ALS				Average
0	programs are located in easily accessible areas for learners.	2.64	Average	2.57	
	Overall	2.27	Low	2.32	Low

Note: Mean scores falling within 1.00-1.79: Very Low, 1.80-2.59: Low, 2.60-3.39: Average, 3.40-4.19: High, 4.20-5.00: Very High

Statistical results show that both ALS teachers and coordinators rated the availability of facilities very low, with mean scores of 1.69 and 1.64 for access to technology, and 1.52 and 1.61 for classroom teaching aids. These findings reflect the widespread lack of digital tools, proper classrooms, and basic resources in community-based ALS stations. Overall mean scores of 2.27 and 2.32 indicate a low level of implementation in terms of facilities. Supporting studies confirm that ALS suffers from poor infrastructure, limited digital access, and insufficient government funding—especially in rural areas—hindering quality education delivery and innovation.

Table 8. Perception of the Coordinators and Teachers to the ALS Program Implementation in Terms of Stakeholders' Support and Involvement

	Items	Teachers	Level	Coordinator Level	s
1	The ALS program receives adequate support from local government units (LGUs).	2.82	Average	2.89	Average
2	Community members actively participate in the implementation of the ALS program.	3.10	Average	3.21	Average
3	Parents are involved in the learning process and regularly communicate with ALS facilitators.	3.16	Average	3.32	Average
4	The ALS program receives support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or other external partners.	3.12	Average	3.20	Average
5	Stakeholders (e.g., local businesses and community leaders) are regularly consulted regarding ALS program decisions.	2.76	Average	2.89	Average
6	Teachers in the ALS program have opportunities for professional development through the support of local education authorities.	3.05	Average	2.96	Average
7	There is a clear communication channel between ALS facilitators and the stakeholders (e.g., government, community, and parents).	2.92	Average	2.81	Average
8	The ALS program benefits from the active involvement of volunteers and mentors from the community.	2.82	Average	3.30	Average
9	The ALS program receives sufficient funding from stakeholders to cover the necessary educational resources and activities.	2.82	Average	2.78	Average
10	Stakeholders demonstrate a strong commitment to the sustainability and success of the ALS program.	2.68	Average	3.10	Average
	Overall	2.92	Average	3.05	Average

Note: Mean scores falling within 1.00-1.79: Very Low, 1.80-2.59: Low, 2.60-3.39: Average, 3.40-4.19: High, 4.20-5.00: Very High

Table 8 shows that both ALS teachers and coordinators rated stakeholder support and involvement at an average level, with mean scores of 2.92 and 3.05. Support from LGUs and communities varies, with some areas showing strong backing and others offering minimal help. Funding and active community participation remain inconsistent, especially in low-income barangays where livelihood takes priority over education. This uneven support impacts

program sustainability. Studies confirm that while some stakeholders contribute effectively, many lack resources or commitment, leading to unreliable engagement in ALS implementation.

Table 9. Perception of the Coordinators and Teachers to the ALS Program Implementation in Terms of Opportunities for Completers

	Items	Teachers	Level	Coordinators	Level
1	The ALS program provides learners with access to further formal education after completion.	2.67	Average	2.61	Average
2	Completers of the ALS program have opportunities to pursue vocational or technical training.	2.82	Average	2.72	Average
3	The ALS program prepares learners for employment by providing relevant skills and certifications.	2.42	Low	2.46	Low
4	Completers of the ALS program are given priority or support for entering higher education institutions.	2.37	Low	2.42	Low
5	The ALS program helps completers access job placement or internship opportunities in the community.	2.51	Low	2.46	Low
6	The ALS program connects completers with local businesses or employers who are willing to hire them.	1.91	Low	1.84	Low
7	The ALS program provides learners with life skills that increase their chances of success in their personal and professional lives.	3.02	Average	3.14	Average
8	Completers of the ALS program have opportunities to receive ongoing support and guidance after graduation.	2.38	Low	2.41	Low
9	The ALS program equips learners with entrepreneurial skills that allow them to start their businesses or ventures.	3.30	Average	3.28	Average
10	The ALS program helps learners build a strong network with peers and mentors that opens up career opportunities.	3.28	Average	3.32	Average
	Overall	2.67	Low	2.67	Low

Note: Mean scores falling within 1.00-1.79: Very Low, 1.80-2.59: Low, 2.60-3.39: Average, 3.40-4.19: High, 4.20-5.00: Very High

Table 9 reveals that both ALS teachers and coordinators rated the program's support for completers as low, with an overall mean of 2.67. The lowest-rated item was the lack of connection between ALS graduates and local employers, scoring 1.91 (teachers) and 1.84 (coordinators). These findings reflect the absence of clear exit plans, job placement support, or tracking systems for graduates. Contributing factors include limited recognition of ALS certificates, socio-economic barriers, and a lack of follow-up support such as mentorship or job matching—issues that hinder graduates from accessing better opportunities after completing the program.

Table 10. Summary of the Perceived Level of the Implementation of ALS as Rated by the Teachers and Coordinators

Dimensions	Teachers	Level	Coordinators	Level
Curriculum relevance	4.81	Very High	4.28	Very High
Instructional support	3.13	Average	3.22	Average
Availability of facilities	2.27	Low	2.32	Low
Stakeholders' support and involvement	2.92	Average	3.05	Average
Opportunities for completers	2.67	Low	2.67	Low

Table 10 summarizes the overall ratings of ALS program implementation. Curriculum relevance received the highest scores from teachers (4.81) and coordinators (4.28), followed by moderate ratings for instructional and stakeholder support. However, implementation was rated low in terms of facility availability and opportunities for completers. Notably, access to technology and job linkages were rated very low, reflecting ongoing challenges like inadequate digital resources and lack of post-program tracking. These findings highlight both the strengths and critical gaps in ALS delivery across Butuan City, pointing to areas needing urgent improvement.

4. What are the challenges experienced by the coordinators, teachers, and completers along with the implementation of ALS in the Division of Butuan City?

Table 11. Challenges Experienced by the Coordinators along with the Implementation of ALS in the Division of Butuan City

Theme	Sub-theme	Responses
Resource and Accessibility Challenges	Funding and Infrastructure Challenges	ALS programs often face limited funding Many ALS centers lack facilities. Programs are inaccessible in remote areas.
	Accessibility Issues, and Community Involvement and Support	A lack of support from Barangay officials was observed. Inadequate family and community support.
Learner Engagement and Socioeconomic Challenges	Learner Motivation and Socioeconomic Factors	Struggle with motivation and discipline. Low-income backgrounds affect studies. Behavior issues and absenteeism due to food priorities.
	Dropout and Absenteeism Concerns	Financial and family matters cause absenteeism The drop-out problem is a significant concern in ALS programs Peer influence results in dropout issues.

Table 11 outlines the challenges faced by ALS coordinators in Butuan City, grouped into two key themes: (1) resource and accessibility challenges and (2) learner engagement and socioeconomic issues. Coordinators highlighted limited funding, inadequate facilities, and lack of barangay support, which hinder program effectiveness and accessibility—especially in remote areas. They also reported difficulties with learner motivation, absenteeism, and dropouts due to poverty, behavior issues, and the need to prioritize basic needs. These challenges align with existing literature emphasizing the need for better funding, infrastructure, and learner support to sustain ALS implementation.

Table 12. Challenges Experienced by the Teachers along with the Implementation of ALS in the Division of Butuan City

Major Theme	Sub-Theme	Responses
Socioeconomic and Resource Challenges	Socioeconomic and Family Challenges	Family problems on marital issues and distance.
		Dropout due to socioeconomic struggles, responsibilities, and motivation.
		Difficulties due to family responsibilities and work conflicts.
		Need to work on results due to low interest.
	Accessibility Issues, and Community Involvement and Support	Limited ALS awareness, resources, and training.
Learner Engagement and Socioeconomic Challenges	Resource and Training Limitations	Limitations on materials and trained facilitators.
	Learner Motivation and Socioeconomic Factors	Work conflict, financial assistance.
	Collaboration and Support Issues	Collaboration with other agencies is minimal.
	Dropout and Absenteeism Concerns	Dropouts are due to financial struggles and work commitments.
		Lukewarm learner attitudes and interests were observed.

Table 12 highlights the key challenges faced by ALS teachers in Butuan City, grouped into two themes: (1) socioeconomic and resource challenges and (2) support and engagement issues. Teachers reported that many learners drop out due to poverty, family responsibilities, and work obligations. There is also a lack of learning materials, teacher training, and awareness about ALS.

Additionally, teachers struggle with low learner motivation, weak collaboration with agencies, and limited support from families and communities.

These issues hinder program effectiveness and align with previous studies emphasizing the need for stronger inter-agency collaboration, teacher support, and learner engagement.

Table 13. Challenges Experienced by the Graduates along with the Implementation of ALS in the Division of Butuan City

Theme	Sub-theme	Verbatim/Responses	Translation
Academic and Resource Challenges Personal and Engagement Issues	Academic and Scheduling Challenges	R1 "Ang national exam kay permi ma moved."	"Our final examination schedule moves frequently."
	Resource and Infrastructure Issues	R2 "Gamay ray time sa assignments labi na kay naa koy trabaho".	"We have limited time for assignments especially I have work."
	Accessibility Issues, and Community Involvement and Support	R3 "Dili ko confident nga mupasar sa exam".	"I have self-doubt about passing tests."
		R5 "Walay sako nga klasehanan, usahay kay sa waiting shed ra"	"We have inadequate and inconsistent classrooms, sometimes we conducted classes under the waiting shed."
		R10 "Mahadlok ko mag college kay kulang pako og kahibalo labi na sa computer"	"I am afraid of going to college because I have lack of knowledge about computer."

		R2 “Magpadidi sa bata samtang mo attend og klase”	“Having a breastfeeding while attending classes.”
Learner Engagement and Socioeconomic Challenges	Accessibility Issues, and Community Involvement and Support Resource and Training Limitations Personal and Family Responsibilities Learner Motivation and Socioeconomic Factors Collaboration and Support Issues.	R7 “Balanse lang gyud, trabaho para sa pamilya samtang nag skwela” R9 “kanang mamabdos, pag-atiman sa bata og kakulangon sa pinansyal” R5 “kadtong wala pami na officially enrolled sa college tungod kay muagi pamig bridging program”	Balancing dreams and family responsibilities”. “When we get pregnant, taking care of a child and financial constraints.” “Where we are not be able to enrolled in college because we should undergo bridging program”.

Table 13 outlines the key challenges faced by ALS completers in Butuan City, grouped into two themes: (1) academic and resource challenges and (2) personal and engagement issues. Learners reported difficulties such as frequent exam schedule changes, limited academic resources, poor classroom conditions, low self-confidence, and inadequate preparation for college. Personal issues like family responsibilities, pregnancy, and financial hardship also hindered attendance and motivation. Some completers noted peers dropping out due to lack of support or interest. These findings reflect the need for improved infrastructure, emotional support, and guidance to help ALS learners succeed.

5. What are the success stories experienced by the graduates after completing ALS?

Table 14. Success Stories Experienced by the Graduates after Completing from Alternative Learning System.

Theme	Verbatim Response	Translation
Success and Achievement	R1 “Naghatag sa ako og kadasig nga makab-ot namu among pangandoy”	“It gives me hope and motivation to succeed”.
	R2 “Ni-enroll dayun ko og college pagka- pasar naku sa exam”	“Pursued college education after passing ALS program”.
	R4 “Nakatrabaho dayun ko human ko ni graduate sa ALS”	“I got employed after ALS graduation.”
	R5 “Nahuman naku ang kolehiyo og nakatrabaho kog tarung”	“I completed college education and working well due to ALS.”
Accessibility Issues, and Community Involvement and Support	R3 “Nakatabang sa paglambo sa pagbasa ,pagsulat og pagsabot sa teksto para sa exam”	“It enhanced reading, writing, and comprehension skills for exam.”
Resource and Training Limitations		“The teachers explained lessons thoroughly, supported, and ensured student understanding.”
Personal and Family Responsibilities	R6 “Ang mga maestra mutabang gyud og pasabot sa amua”.	

Table 14 highlights the success stories of ALS A&E Junior High School completers, grouped into two themes: (1) success and achievement and (2) educational and skill development.

Passers shared experiences of renewed hope, gaining employment, pursuing and completing college, and building better lives through ALS. Others emphasized improvements in reading, writing, and comprehension, crediting supportive teachers for their growth. These stories reflect ALS's positive impact on learners' confidence, education, and career paths.

Studies (Ucab & Luzano, 2023) affirm that ALS enhances self-efficacy, skills, and productivity, leading to personal and professional success and contributing to social mobility and community development.

6. Based on the findings of the study, what sustainability framework can be developed to ensure long-term implementation of ALS?



Figure 5. Sustainability Framework for Long-Term ALS Program Implementation.

Relative to the findings derived from the data, a sustainability framework for the long-term implementation of the ALS program with certainty on positive impact is presented in Figure 5. Four major components are identified based on the major results from the study.

The major inputs in the presented framework are interconnected in a Circular path, which represents that each of the components is equally important for sustainability. Table 15 is the activity plan for long-term program implementation from the proposed framework to create a sustainable ALS program that ensures effective learning environments, robust exit strategies for graduates, continuous professional development for educators, and a comprehensive data management system for monitoring and evaluation.

Table 15. Activity Plan for Long-term ALS Program Implementation in Butuan City.

Key Areas	Objective	Activities	Expected Output
1. Availability of Instructional Facilities	Ensure that all learners enrolled in ALS Centers in Butuan City have access to adequate and appropriate learning environments.	ALS Facility Assessment and Planning	
		The Local Government Unit (LGU) officials of Butuan City, together with the DepEd-ALS focal, will conduct an audit of existing facilities in all ALS centers in Butuan City to identify strengths and weaknesses.	An audit of existing facilities in all ALS centers was conducted to identify strengths and weaknesses.
		The Local Government Unit officials (Chairman-Comm on Education, Brgy. Captains) of Butuan City, together with the DepEd-ALS Focal, will develop a strategic plan to upgrade or construct necessary instructional facilities, ensuring they are accessible, safe, and conducive to learning.	A strategic plan was developed to upgrade or construct necessary instructional facilities, ensuring accessibility, safety, and a conducive learning environment.
		ALS Resource Allocation	
		The Local Government Unit (LGU) officials of Butuan, together with the DepEd ALS,	

		shall allocate funding to all ALS centers as stipulated in RA 11510 to improve facilities equipped with learning materials, technology, and educational tools tailored to ALS needs.	The Local Government Unit of Butuan allocated a budget to all ALS Centers.
		Learning materials, technology, and educational tools tailored to ALS needs.	
		Flexibility in ALS Learning Spaces	
		The ALS teachers and coordinators, together with the Brgy. Officials will create adaptable learning environments that can accommodate varied teaching methods and learner needs, including outdoor and community-based learning spaces.	Flexible learning spaces catering to diverse teaching styles and learner needs were created, utilizing both indoor
2. Assurance of Exit Opportunities for Passers	Facilitate pathways for ALS passers in Butuan City to further education and employment.	Career Counseling and Support Services to ALS Learners	
		The DepEd-ALS Focal of Butuan City, as well as the District ALS Coordinators, shall implement guidance programs that inform ALS learners about various post-completion pathways (e.g., vocational training, higher education, entrepreneurship).	Guidance programs informing ALS learners about post-completion pathways (vocational training, higher education, entrepreneurship) were implemented.
		Partnerships with Employers (DOLE & TESDA) and Educational Institutions in Butuan City	
		The Division ALS Focal, as well as the District ALS Coordinators and teachers, shall collaborate with local businesses in Butuan City and vocational training centers like TESDA and the DOLE to provide internship placements, job shadowing, and employment opportunities.	Collaboration with local businesses, TESDA, and DOLE secured internship placements, job shadowing, and employment opportunities for ALS learners.
		Create articulation agreements between the DepEd-ALS and technical schools and colleges, particularly in Butuan City, to ensure smooth transitions for completers.	Articulation agreements were created between DepEd-ALS and technical schools/colleges to facilitate smooth transitions for completers.
		ALS Literacy cum Livelihood and Skills Development Programs	

		Butuan City LGU, in collaboration with the Dep-ALS of Butuan, shall allocate funds to open more livelihood and skills training programs that equip learners with practical skills aligned with market demand.	Funds were allocated by Butuan City LGU, in collaboration with Dep-ALS, to open more livelihood and skills training programs.
3. Professional Growth and Development for ALS Teachers and Coordinators	Invest in the continuous professional development of ALS educators and coordinators.	<p>Ongoing Training Opportunities for ALS Coordinators and Teachers</p> <p>The Division ALS Focal, along with the ALS Master Teachers, shall develop a comprehensive professional development plan that includes workshops, seminars, and certification programs focused on innovative teaching practices, curriculum development, and learner engagement.</p>	A comprehensive professional development plan, including workshops, seminars, and certification programs, was developed.
		Mentorship and Peer Support	
		The Division ALS Focal, as well as the Master Teachers of Butuan City, will create a mentorship program by conducting LAC sessions where experienced educators support less experienced teachers, fostering a culture of collaboration and shared learning.	A mentorship program utilizing LAC sessions was created to support less experienced teachers through collaboration with experienced educators.
		Recognition and Advancement for ALS Teachers	
		The Division ALS Supervisor shall implement a recognition system to reward exemplary teaching, encourage participation in professional development activities, and promote career advancement opportunities for ALS coordinators and teachers.	A recognition system was implemented to reward exemplary teaching, encourage professional development, and promote career advancement.
4. Strong Data Management System for ALS Monitoring and Evaluation	Establish a robust data management system to track performance, ensure accountability, and inform decision-making.	<p>Data Collection Framework</p> <p>The Division Education Program Specialist in ALS-II (EPSA-II) shall utilize technology by creating an ALS DATA DASHBOARD to streamline data collection and reporting processes, ensuring accurate and real-time data entry.</p>	An ALS data dashboard was created to streamline data collection and reporting.

Define key performance indicators (KPIs) such as enrollment rates, completion rates, learner progression, and post-completion outcomes (employment or further education).	Regular Monitoring of ALS Activities	
	The Division ALS Supervisors, together with the Superintendent, with the support of the Local Government Officials, shall conduct quarterly evaluations of ALS programs in all Centers in Butuan City focused on both qualitative and quantitative measures to assess efficacy and areas for improvement, to ensure that feedback is incorporated and that the program remains relevant to community needs.	Quarterly evaluations of ALS programs, using qualitative and quantitative measures, were conducted.
	Reporting and Feedback Loops	
	The Division ALS Supervisor, in collaboration with the city officials, particularly the Committee Education Chairman, shall develop a systematic approach by conducting a Literacy Conference for disseminating evaluation findings to all stakeholders, including educators, learners, and community members, and establish feedback mechanisms to incorporate stakeholder input in program adjustments and enhancements.	A systematic approach, including a literacy conference, was developed.

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4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Considering the findings presented above, the following conclusions are drawn.

The A&E Junior High School ALS program has produced a significant number of graduates, which resulted in the opening of the A&E- Senior High School program and has landed recognition and awards. On the other note, the percentage of graduates is significantly less than the expected target from 2018-2024. This is a major area that needs improvement, confirming the national claims that ALS has not yet achieved its goal of addressing the illiteracy problem of the country.

Immediately after graduation from junior high school, the pursuit of education (senior high school) was the first choice among the graduates. However, their present career is that only a few of them have completed a college degree and landed a stable job. This speaks of the lack of long-term impact of ALS.

The implementation of the ALS program needs serious improvements in the aspects of instructional support, technological resources, and career exit opportunities for the graduates. When these areas are left unaddressed, illiteracy will persist as a national concern.

Socioeconomic factors and the lack of exit opportunities are the major hindrances to the long-term success of the implementation of the ALS program. These explained the poor engagement and motivation of learners to complete their education.

Despite the challenges, the evident success stories of the ALS graduates are benchmark information for the program's sustainability. It can be inferred that while many enrollees fail to land a beautiful program exit, some of them have enjoyed the positive outcome of the program.

.A sustainability framework is suggested for the long-term implementation of ALS with emphasis on the availability of instructional facilities, assurance of exit opportunities for completers, professional growth and development for coordinators and teachers, and a strong data management system for monitoring and evaluation.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions presented above, the following recommendations are highly suggested:

DepEd Management. Continue to look for intervention measures and effective solutions to address illiteracy problems in the country through ALS. This research contributed significantly to the development of a sustainability framework for ALS. By identifying the key factors that influenced the long-term success of ALS (such as funding, community involvement, government support, and teacher training), the study provided actionable recommendations for ensuring that ALS continued to thrive in Butuan City and other similar areas. A well-designed sustainability framework would help ALS remain a viable and impactful educational option for marginalized learners in the long run.

ALS Program Coordinators. The findings of the study can be used as an Aid for coordinators to effectively monitor targets and evaluate areas that need improvement with the assurance of the sufficiency of evidence. This study plays an important role in improving the M&E framework for ALS in Butuan City. By investigating existing monitoring practices, identifying gaps in data collection, and assessing the impact of ALS on learners, the study can propose a more effective M&E system. This will not only improve the efficiency of ALS in the region but also ensure that resources are used optimally, goals are met, and outcomes are tracked for future improvements.

ALS Teachers. Provide teachers with an overview of the weaknesses and opportunities based on the experiences of the learners. Through the utilization of constructive feedback, teachers will be provided with significant inputs and guidance on the things to adjust towards better teaching performance.

Stakeholders. Serve as a basis for stakeholders, such as the Local Government and DepEd officials, to improve the allocation of resources, adjust strategies for educational outreach, and ensure that ALS programs are better aligned with the needs of the community.

Community of Marginalized Group. Ensuring that individuals from these marginalized groups could access quality learning opportunities. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of ALS in the region, the study proposed solutions to enhance access to education for all, improving literacy and skills development among underserved populations.

Academicians and Researchers. Improve its integration into formal education systems. It also provided recommendations for possible interventions and strategies that other local government units, community organizations, and NGOs could use to improve ALS delivery and impact in their respective regions.

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