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ALS INFED: SOSYALE-IQuaLife Project ("Alternative Learning System Informal Education: Skilled Out-of-School Youths and Adults, Livelihood and Employment to Improve Quality of Life")

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the implementation and outcomes of the Alternative Learning System Informal Education (ALS InFed): SOSYALE-IQuaLife Project in Nabua West District, Camarines Sur, Philippines, focusing on technical and entrepreneurial skills development, livelihood opportunities, and program effectiveness among disadvantaged out-of-school youths and adults (OSYAs). Anchored in Auguste Comte's philosophy of altruism, the study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design involving 150 mapped participants. Data were collected using a validated socio-demographic questionnaire, a five-point Likert-scale implementation evaluation checklist, competency assessment rubrics, and project monitoring records. Frequency counts, percentages, and weighted means were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that 58 participants (38.7%) demonstrated high technical proficiency, while 52 (34.7%) achieved satisfactory entrepreneurial competencies. Overall, 36.7% attained verified competency benchmarks, exceeding the 30% project target. Additionally, 54 participants (36%) accessed immediate economic opportunities, comprising 28 employed individuals and 26 who established micro-livelihood enterprises. Program goal alignment (4.68), resource adequacy (4.22), and service sufficiency (4.52) received favorable evaluations. Despite socioeconomic constraints and initial resource limitations, stakeholder partnerships supported program implementation. The study concluded that community-based informal education provided accessible skills development and immediate livelihood opportunities. It recommended program expansion, strengthened institutional partnerships, increased learning resources, and long-term outcome monitoring. The study aligns with Sustainable Development Goals 1 (No Poverty), 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Its sustainability contribution lies in promoting educational inclusion, practical livelihood competencies, community collaboration, and potential socioeconomic self-reliance, although long-term outcomes remain unverified.

Keywords: *Alternative Learning System, Community-Based Education, Economic Self-Reliance, Entrepreneurial Skills, Informal Education, Livelihood Opportunities, Stakeholder Partnerships, Technical Skills Development*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education and employable skills are essential to improving opportunities among out-of-school youths and adults (OSYAs), particularly those experiencing poverty, limited educational access, and unemployment. In the Philippines, the Alternative Learning System (ALS) provides flexible educational pathways that support functional literacy, lifelong learning, and skills development (Department of Education, 2022). However, financial constraints, inadequate learning resources, and limited employment opportunities continue to affect disadvantaged learners (Albert et al., 2024). The ALS Informal Education (InFed): SOSYALE-IQuaLife Project, implemented in Nabua West District, Camarines Sur, addressed these concerns through technical and entrepreneurial training, mentoring, community partnerships, and livelihood opportunities. Involving 150 mapped OSYAs, the project sought to strengthen practical competencies, promote economic self-reliance, and improve participants' quality of life through accessible, community-based education.

Research Problem

Despite initiatives promoting educational inclusion, out-of-school youths and adults continue to encounter barriers that restrict their access to education, employment, and sustainable livelihoods. Alvarez (2024) identified financial difficulties, family circumstances, personal challenges, and accessibility concerns as contributing factors to educational discontinuation among ALS learners. Similarly, Albert et al. (2024) documented persistent limitations in ALS resources, facilities, institutional support, and employment outcomes. Although ALS provides alternative learning opportunities, the extent to which community-based informal education develops practical competencies and facilitates immediate livelihood opportunities requires evaluation. Victoria (2024) emphasized the importance of instructional support, resource allocation, and employment-oriented interventions in strengthening ALS implementation. In Nabua West District, these concerns prompted the implementation of the SOSYALE-IQuaLife Project. The research examined participants' socio-demographic characteristics, acquisition of technical and entrepreneurial skills, access to employment or self-employment, alignment of implementation goals, adequacy of resources, and sufficiency of educational services.

Assumptions of the Study

The project was guided by the working assumptions that accessible, needs-based informal education could help disadvantaged learners develop practical competencies and improve their livelihood prospects. It further assumed that contextualized learning activities, hands-on training, mentoring, and community partnerships could facilitate skills acquisition and access to economic opportunities. These assumptions are consistent with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2022), which emphasizes inclusive adult education, and the International Labour Organization (2024), which identifies skills development and entrepreneurship support as relevant interventions for improving youth employment outcomes. These were program-level assumptions rather than predetermined research findings.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective was to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the ALS InFed: SOSYALE-IQuaLife Project among 150 mapped out-of-school youths and adults in Nabua West District, Camarines Sur. Specifically, the study sought to describe participants' socio-demographic profiles in terms of age, gender, civil status, family background, and distance from the Community Learning Center; determine the extent of technical and entrepreneurial skills acquisition; identify immediate employment and livelihood opportunities; assess the congruence of implementation goals with program objectives; evaluate the adequacy of available resources; and determine whether the services provided addressed participants' learning and development needs. The evaluation was intended to generate evidence for

improving community-based ALS interventions and strengthening educational and livelihood support for disadvantaged learners.

Theoretical or Conceptual Basis

The project was originally anchored in Auguste Comte's philosophy of altruism, emphasizing concern for others and collective responsibility in addressing community needs. This perspective informed an intervention designed to support marginalized learners through education, skills development, and cooperation among stakeholders. Its contemporary conceptual justification is consistent with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2022), which recognizes adult education as a means of promoting inclusion, lifelong learning, and sustainable development. The International Labour Organization (2024) likewise identifies integrated skills and entrepreneurship interventions as important approaches to improving employment prospects among disadvantaged young people. Conceptually, the project linked learner needs assessment, contextualized livelihood training, mentoring, supplementary learning resources, stakeholder partnerships, and employment facilitation with technical competency development and immediate economic opportunities. Monitoring and evaluation supported the assessment of implementation quality. This framework is consistent with Albert et al. (2024), who emphasized the importance of adequate resources, stakeholder coordination, and outcome monitoring in strengthening Philippine ALS programs.

The study primarily aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education) through inclusive, community-based learning and practical skills development, and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) through entrepreneurship, livelihood preparation, and employment facilitation. These priorities reflect the importance of connecting educational opportunities with economic participation among disadvantaged populations (International Labour Organization, 2024; UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2022). The project also supports the objectives of SDG 1 (No Poverty) by promoting income-generating competencies and economic self-reliance, and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through collaboration among ALS implementers, local government units, businesses, and community stakeholders. Its use of indigenous, locally available, and recyclable materials provides an additional, practice-level connection to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), although environmental outcomes were not directly measured.
Overall, the research contributes to educational, socio-economic, community, and institutional sustainability by examining an accessible model of informal education that connects practical learning with livelihood opportunities. Its relevance lies in the potential application of evidence-based ALS interventions to improve educational inclusion, community participation, and economic opportunities for underserved learners (Albert et al., 2024; United Nations, 2025).

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-quantitative research design to assess the implementation and outcomes of the ALS InFed: SOSYALE-IQuaLife Project. Quantitative data were used to describe learner characteristics, measure technical and entrepreneurial competencies, determine access to livelihood and employment opportunities, and evaluate the extent of program implementation, resource adequacy, and service sufficiency.

Research Locale or Study Setting

The study was conducted in Nabua West District, Camarines Sur, Philippines, where the ALS InFed: SOSYALE-IQuaLife Project was implemented. The project served out-of-school youths and adults from participating communities through Community Learning Centers and community-based livelihood training activities. Local government units, barangay officials,

business owners, and vocational specialists supported program implementation by providing training resources, facilities, and livelihood opportunities.

Participants or Data Sources

The study involved 150 mapped out-of-school youths and adults in Nabua West District during Calendar Year 2025. Participants were described according to age, gender, civil status, family background, and distance of residence from the nearest Community Learning Center. Data on skills acquisition, employment opportunities, and program implementation were obtained through learner assessments, structured evaluation instruments, and monitoring records.

Research Instruments or Materials

Data were collected using a validated two-part research instrument consisting of a socio-demographic profile questionnaire and an implementation evaluation checklist. The questionnaire gathered participants' personal and household characteristics, while the checklist assessed program implementation using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (Very Great Extent) to 1 (Not Evident). Practical competency assessment rubrics were also used by vocational facilitators to evaluate participants' technical and entrepreneurial skills. Supplementary learning guides, craft-making activity sheets, and locally available materials supported the training activities.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data gathering was undertaken in connection with the project's community mapping, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation activities. Participant information was collected through structured questionnaires, while implementation and resource adequacy were assessed using evaluation checklists. Vocational facilitators evaluated practical skills using competency assessment rubrics. The intervention incorporated technical and entrepreneurial training, mentoring and coaching, livelihood workshops utilizing indigenous and recyclable materials, and supplementary instructional resources. Partnerships with local government units, community organizations, and business owners supported training activities and employment matching. A Management Information System was used to monitor attendance, competency milestones, and program outcomes. Research logs and activity reports were submitted to the Division Research and Development Team for technical review.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentage distributions, and weighted means. Frequencies and percentages were employed to describe participants' socio-demographic profiles, technical and entrepreneurial skills acquisition, and immediate employment or livelihood outcomes. Weighted means were used to determine the extent of implementation, congruence of program goals with objectives, adequacy of resources, and sufficiency of services based on the five-point evaluation scale.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants

3.1.1 Demographic Profile and Socioeconomic Background

The findings revealed that 54% of participants were aged 18–24, 30% were aged 25–35, and 16% were aged 36 and above. Female participants comprised 58% (n = 87), while males accounted for 42% (n = 63). Regarding civil status, 62% were single, 34% were married, and 4% were single parents or separated. More than 82% belonged to households earning below the provincial poverty threshold, primarily relying on informal or seasonal employment. Furthermore, 45% lived within 1–2 kilometers of the nearest Community Learning Center, while 55% resided more than

two kilometers away. The findings indicate that the program primarily served economically disadvantaged young adults with varying household responsibilities and access conditions. Alvarez (2024) identified financial difficulties, family circumstances, and accessibility concerns as significant barriers affecting ALS learners. Similarly, Lagatiera et al. (2024) found that ALS learners commonly belonged to economically vulnerable groups requiring accessible and practical skills development. These studies reinforce the importance of context-responsive educational interventions for disadvantaged populations.

3.2 Technical Skills Acquisition and Economic Opportunities

3.2.1 Acquisition of Technical and Entrepreneurial Competencies

Following the implementation of livelihood training activities, 58 participants (38.7%) demonstrated high proficiency in technical and handicraft production, including recycling-based craft skills. Meanwhile, 52 participants (34.7%) achieved satisfactory mastery of entrepreneurial competencies involving product costing, marketing, and basic bookkeeping. Overall, 36.7% of enrolled learners attained verified competency benchmarks, exceeding the project's 30% target. These findings indicate that the project provided opportunities for participants to acquire practical technical and entrepreneurial competencies relevant to community-based livelihoods. Lagatiera et al. (2024) emphasized that vocational training aligned with learners' needs strengthens the relevance of ALS programs. Similarly, Villaver (2024) documented how ALS graduates applied practical and entrepreneurial skills in livelihood-related activities. The findings support the relevance of combining technical training with basic business management education, although the descriptive results do not establish the magnitude of improvement attributable solely to the intervention.

3.2.2 Employment and Self-Employment Opportunities

The project recorded 28 participants (18.7%) who obtained direct employment or project-based work through local job matching and recruitment activities. Another 26 participants (17.3%) established micro-livelihood enterprises involving activities such as eco-craft production, food processing, and vending. Overall, 54 participants (36%) accessed immediate employment or self-employment opportunities following project implementation. The findings demonstrate that livelihood training accompanied by local employment linkages provided participants with opportunities for economic participation. The International Labour Organization (2024) reported that skills training and entrepreneurship interventions can improve labor-market outcomes among disadvantaged young people. Villaver (2024) likewise documented the contribution of practical ALS competencies and institutional partnerships to employment and small-business development. However, the recorded 36% represents immediate employment and self-employment participation rather than a measured reduction in unemployment or verified long-term income sustainability.

3.3 Evaluation of Program Implementation

3.3.1 Alignment of Implementer Goals with Program Objectives

The evaluation yielded a weighted mean of 4.68, interpreted as **Very Great Extent**, indicating a high degree of congruence between the implementer's goals and the project's objectives. Implementation activities were directed toward functional literacy, technical skills development, livelihood preparation, and community empowerment. The findings suggest that implementation activities were closely aligned with the project's intended educational and livelihood outcomes. Victoria (2024) emphasized the importance of program management, instructional support, and effective implementation in ALS delivery. Similarly, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2022) highlighted the role of relevant adult education in improving inclusion, learning opportunities, and community development. The high evaluation rating reflects favorable assessment of goal alignment within the project.

3.3.2 Adequacy of Training Resources and Facilities

The adequacy of training materials, facilities, and instructional supplies obtained a weighted mean of 4.22, interpreted as Great Extent. Financial and material assistance from local government units, barangay local government units, and other stakeholders supported project implementation and helped address initial resource limitations. The findings indicate that local stakeholder assistance contributed to the availability of instructional and training resources. Albert et al. (2024) identified funding limitations, inadequate facilities, and shortages of learning materials as continuing challenges in Philippine ALS implementation. Victoria (2024) likewise highlighted the relationship between resource allocation, instructional support, and program delivery. These studies underscore the relevance of resource mobilization and community partnerships in supporting accessible alternative education.

3.3.3 Sufficiency of Educational and Livelihood Services

The sufficiency of services obtained a weighted mean of 4.52, interpreted as Very Great Extent. Services included mentoring, hands-on livelihood training, supplementary instructional materials, and flexible learning schedules accommodating participants with family and household responsibilities.

The findings suggest that the services provided were responsive to participants' practical learning needs and personal circumstances. Alvarez (2024) emphasized that financial, family-related, and accessibility barriers influence learners' participation in alternative education. Albert et al. (2024) also identified program adaptability and learner support as important considerations in strengthening ALS delivery. These findings highlight the relevance of flexible scheduling, instructional assistance, and practical training in supporting participation among disadvantaged learners.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The ALS InFed: SOSYALE-IQuaLife Project successfully provided accessible technical and entrepreneurial education to economically disadvantaged out-of-school youths and adults in Nabua West District, Camarines Sur. The findings revealed that 36.7% of participants achieved verified competency benchmarks, exceeding the 30% target, while 36% accessed immediate employment or self-employment opportunities. Strong stakeholder partnerships, adequate learning resources, and responsive instructional services contributed to effective program implementation. The results highlight the potential of community-based informal education to strengthen practical competencies, promote economic self-reliance, and support community development.

It is recommended that the ALS InFed: SOSYALE-IQuaLife Project be expanded to other districts within Camarines Sur to extend educational and livelihood opportunities to more disadvantaged learners. Partnerships with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and local cooperatives should be strengthened to facilitate skills certification, employment opportunities, and startup assistance. Long-term monitoring of graduates' employment, income sustainability, and quality of life over 12–24 months should be undertaken. Additional mobile training equipment, instructional materials, and digital learning resources should also be provided to improve program accessibility and implementation.

The study was limited to 150 mapped out-of-school youths and adults in Nabua West District, Camarines Sur. Its descriptive-quantitative design focused on immediate competency development, livelihood outcomes, and program implementation. Long-term employment stability, sustained income generation, and changes in participants' quality of life were not assessed, limiting conclusions about the project's lasting socioeconomic effects.

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