



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Nineteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7130



Introduced by **HON. MUJIV S. HATAMAN** of the Lone District of Basilan

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution states that, "The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all."

While Filipino Muslims are part of the Philippine education system both public and private, many do not have access to education according to their cultural, traditional, social and religious beliefs, especially for those outside of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)

And as a part of the Filipino population whose numbers range anywhere from over 6 million to as high as 12 million, depending on the source of data, it is imperative that we incorporate Islamic education in all private and public schools especially in cities and municipalities that have no accessible madrasahs for Muslim students. Lest the Philippine education system be viewed as discriminatory against Muslim students.

This bill, therefore, seeks to mandate the institutionalization and the strengthening of the existing Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program of the Department of Education (DepEd) in all public and private basic education schools outside BARMM.

We see the utmost importance of making the ALIVE Program an essential part of the national policy for education as Muslim Filipinos form a significant part of the student population. It also aims to enrich the education system with cultural and religious knowledge of the Islamic faith and foster national unity in diversity among Muslim and non-Muslim students.

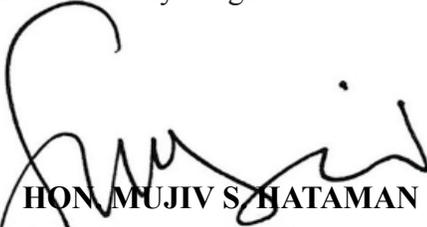
At present, the DepEd's ALIVE Program provides for the issuance of a standard curriculum for public and private elementary schools, along with many other subprograms such as basic madrasah education for out-of-school Muslim youth and adults and the implementation of the Madrasah Education Program in the K to 12 school program, among others.

But the ALIVE Program, despite being institutionalized by DepEd, faced many challenges, such as difficulties in the implementation of the ALIVE curriculum; availability of facilities, textbooks, materials and teachers' training; funds for salaries of teachers, and many more.

This measure seeks to resolve all of those challenges with the authority and mandate of a law. For as long as the ALIVE Program is not implemented properly and correctly, Filipino Muslim students suffer from a lack of competent instruction of the Islamic faith while in a secular school.

It also mandates the formulation of a roadmap that will comprehensively and competently lay out its effective implementation of the ALIVE Program, specifically addressing the existing challenges including the gap in competencies of basic education graduates of madrasahs who do not have the skills for immediate employment.

All these considered, the immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.



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AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING AND STRENGTHENING THE ARABIC LANGUAGE AND ISLAMIC VALUES EDUCATION (ALIVE) PROGRAM IN ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Short Title – This Act shall be known as the “Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Act”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Principles and Policy – The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. Towards this end, it shall be the duty of the State to protect and promote the rights of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. The State likewise recognizes the complementary roles of public and private institutions in the educational system and shall exercise reasonable supervision and regulation of all educational institutions.

It likewise recognizes the natural and primary right and duty of parents in rearing the youth for civic efficiency and the development of moral character, which shall receive government support. To further this state policy, educational institutions shall promote the inclusion of all learners, especially Muslim Filipinos, in programs that preserve their unique culture which includes the teaching of Arabic Language and Islamic Values. Such programs shall serve as instruments for their maximum participation in national development and ensuring their

involvement in achieving national unity in diversity among Muslim and non-Muslim learners and the country as a whole.

SEC. 3. Objectives – This Act aims to achieve the following objectives:

- a. Institutionalize an effective and efficient program in the basic education system of the country that promotes, strengthens, respects, and preserves the Muslim Filipinos' distinct historical identity, culture, customs, and traditions;
- b. Strengthen the existing Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program and make it a vital component of the national educational system;
- c. Ensure the contribution of Muslim Filipinos to national goals and aspirations aimed at making them partners in nation-building;
- d. Recognize Muslim Filipinos whose values and competencies enable them to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to building the nation; and
- e. Qualify and capacitate competent teachers of ALIVE.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms – As used in this Act:

- a. Arabic Language – is the language of the Arabs as formally and grammatically taught under the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program.
- b. Arabic Language and Islamic Values – refers to programs implemented in public and private schools that aim to provide additional subjects on ALIVE in the basic education curriculum.
- c. *Asatidz* – is the general Arabic term for teachers historically or traditionally used in most Muslim Filipino communities. It is the plural form of the word *Ustadz*, a term that refers to a male teacher, and *Ustadzah*, a term that refers to a female teacher. It includes Ulama (*singular, Alim*) and Alimat (*singular, Alimah*), who are male and female professionals, respectively, who specialize in Islamic Studies and obtained their education locally or abroad through Arabic Language.
- d. Accelerated Teacher Education Program – refers to a customized course approved by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to be delivered by Higher Education Institution (HEI) partners, through which

ALIVE *Asatidz* deployed in public and private schools may earn a teaching degree and take Licensure Examination for Teachers.

- e. Cultural and Religious Learning Institutions (CRLI) – the oldest forms of learning in the Philippines which teach Muslim Filipinos their culture, customs, beliefs, and practices. The CRLI is the technical term denoting these indigenous alternative systems of education.
- f. Islamic Values – refer to moral and ethical values or virtues that bare based on the teachings of the Glorious Qur’an and exemplified by the practice of the Holy Prophet.
- g. Madrasah – (*plural madaris*) is an arabic term for school which is operationally defined as an educational institution that is community-based and operated privately wherein the medium of instruction is the Arabic Language. Islamic Studies and Arabic literacy are its core emphasis.
- h. Public Madaris – refer to DepEd-run institutions that provide madrasah education.
- i. Private Madaris – refer to private schools or providers of madrasah education. These can be categorized as: (1) traditional madrasah that conducts Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education, and Islamic studies, and (2) private madrasah that conducts regular K to 12 classes and implements a madrasah curriculum recognized by the Department of Education (DepEd). For purposes of this Act, these shall include other types of relevant and similar learning institutions that teach Indigenous Knowledge Skills and Processes which are part of Muslim culture and belief, key cultural and artisan skills of Muslim cultures, and Islamic Studies.

SEC. 5. Scope of Application – This Act shall be implemented in all public schools and private madaris in the country located within and outside of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). It shall also apply to learners enrolled in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) pursuant to Republic Act No. 11510 or the “Alternative Learning System Act”.

SEC. 6. The Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program – The ALIVE Program is hereby institutionalized to provide Muslim Filipino learners the appropriate and relevant educational opportunities while recognizing their cultural contexts and unique purposes for participating in the Program. It shall include, but is not limited to:

- a. Provision of facilities, school furniture, and equipment;
- b. Provision of relevant textbooks and instructional materials;
- c. Training or capacity-building of Asatidz to include training of trainers, supervisors, and administrators;
- d. Provision of technical and financial educational assistance to DepEd accredited or recognized private madaris;
- e. Monitoring and evaluation system of the ALIVE Program and its implementation;
- f. Accreditation or recognition criteria and system for private madaris; and
- g. Forging of inter-agency or intergovernmental agreements on curriculum and standards.

SEC. 7. Teaching of ALIVE – At the option expressed in writing by the parents or guardians of the learners, the subject of Arabic Language or Islamic Values Education, or both, shall be taught to Muslim Filipino learners, as well as to non-Muslim Filipino learners as an integral part of the ALIVE Program.

The teaching of Arabic language aims to develop the learners' functional literacy in Arabic, while the teaching of Islamic Values aims to help the learners acquire the desired Islamic values that would guide them to be “makatao”, “maka-Diyos”, “makakalikasan”, at “makabayan”. The teaching of Islamic Values must also emphasize the values of interfaith dialogue, multiculturalism, and respect for differences in belief. Subject to the consent in writing by the parents or guardians of the learners, Islam shall be allowed to be taught to their children or wards within the regular class hours without additional cost to the government.

SEC. 8. Office on Madrasah Education – To ensure effective, efficient, and smooth management of the ALIVE Programs, there is hereby created an Office on Madrasah Education (OME) in the DepEd to be headed by the Undersecretary for Madaris. This office shall coordinate with the relevant stakeholders for the proper implementation of the Madaris programs.

SEC. 9. The ALIVE Program Multi-Year Roadmap – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd through the OME, shall initiate the crafting of an ALIVE multi-year roadmap covering a minimum period of five (5) years. The multi-year roadmap shall serve as a guide to government agencies and private stakeholders for the optimal realization of the objectives of this Act. It shall set the overall direction of the ALIVE Program and shall

contain the current policy, practices, gaps, and challenges affecting its integration and implementation in the basic education of Muslim Filipinos as well as of non-Muslim Filipinos. It shall likewise set detailed targets and outcomes for a minimum period of five (5) years and provide the public and private stakeholders' specific actions or interventions to include implementation and monitoring strategies, and annual budgetary requirements. It shall be subject to a periodic review and updating to determine its implementation status and ensure that the institutionalization and strengthening of the ALIVE Program envisioned in this Act is realized and sustained.

The roadmap shall be completed within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act and crafted in consultation with the ALIVE Advisory Council created hereafter, the NCMF, CHED, TESDA, NCIP, NCCA, the University of the Philippines' Institute of Islamic Studies (UP-IIS), the King Faisal Center for Islamic , Arabic, and Asian Studies (KFCIAAS) of the Mindanao State University (MSU), other concerned government agencies, and other relevant organizations and education stakeholders. The roadmap shall be periodically reviewed and updated not later than five (5) years from its implementation until the ALIVE Program is fully institutionalized and integrated into the Philippine Education System.

SEC. 10. The Bureau of Learning Delivery – The Bureau of Learning Delivery (BLD) of the DepEd shall implement the provisions of this Act. It shall:

- a. Coordinate with other national government agencies and offices as partner implementing agencies;
- b. Promote and strengthen the ALIVE Program;
- c. Initiate the preparation and regular updating of the ALIVE Program multi-year roadmap, supported by the annual work and financial plans, for the effective implementation of this Act;
- d. Subject to the approval of the Secretary of Education, set standards, approve, and ensure the availability of textbooks and other learning resources for use in the ALIVE Program. The BLD shall ensure that these textbooks and learning resources passed standard screening and evaluation process prior to their publication, procurement, and distribution;
- e. Ensure the training and capacity-building of the Asatidz and the training of trainers, administrators, and supervisors;
- f. Implement policies and standards for the use of learning delivery modalities, including the training of Asatidz on distance education;

- g. Subject to the approval of the Secretary of Education, formulate standards and criteria in three establishment, accreditation or recognition of private madaris and CRLIs;
- h. Supervise, monitor, evaluate, and assess the compliance, operations and performance of public and private madaris, and their personnel pursuant to this Act, and regularly submit reports to the Secretary of Education; and
- i. Perform such other necessary functions for the effective and efficient implementation of this Act.

The head of the ALIVE Program in the DepEd and its regional and division offices shall be a Muslim Filipino who shall be qualified based on existing Philippine Qualification Standards.

SEC. 11. Hiring of Asatidz – The DepEd through the BLD, and in consultation with the CSC and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), shall hire a sufficient number of Asatidz and create plantilla positions for the Asatidz. It shall also establish a merit and classification system taking into consideration the position classification, salaries, career progression, and their duties and responsibilities.

SEC. 12. ALIVE Teacher Education and Training – The Deped shall develop and conduct regular training programs and workshops for in-service Asatidz, including training of trainers, to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and competence to teach ALIVE, as well as enhance their skills on their roles as Asatidz, taking into consideration the Muslim Filipinos' culture and values.

The CHED, under its Technical Committee for Islamic Studies, shall likewise develop policies, standards, and guidelines for standardized and formalized Madrasah Education Curriculum with tracks that include a specialized degree in Madrasah Teaching.

The DepEd shall likewise strengthen the Accelerated Teacher Education Program to ensure that there is a sufficient number of Asatidz for teaching of Arabic Language, or Islamic Values Education, or both.

SEC. 13. Special Eligibility and Qualifying Examination – For the purposes of meeting the eligibility requirement for the position of Asatidz, the PRC shall develop and administer special qualifying examinations for permanent appointment of Asatidz positions in the DepEd. This shall include ulama, alimat, and other Madrasah Education teaching graduates

and holders of degrees or sufficient units, or credentials earned from institutions of higher learning within or outside the country, or both, for them to become Asatidz.

The PRC in coordination with the CSC, shall grant special license for those enumerated in the preceding paragraph who passed the special qualifying examinations: *Provided*, that the eligibility herein granted may only qualify the grantee to permanent appointment as Asatidz and shall not be considered as a substitute to second level eligibility unless authorized by the CSC.

Graduates with Latin Honors, i.e, summa cum laude, magna cum laude, and cum laude, from a recognized university or institution of higher learning in Arabic or Islamic Studies, within or outside the country, may be exempted from the qualifying examinations and shall be deemed to have met the eligibility requirement for permanent appointment to Astidz positions subject to applicable Civil Service rules on granting honor graduate eligibility.

SEC. 14. Data on ALIVE – The DepEd, through the Information Communications and Technology Service, shall gather relevant data on the implementation of the ALIVE Program, including but not limited to data on learners, list of existing public and private Madaris and CRLIs, list of private partners, and other relevant data and information that the DepEd may identify.

For purposes of statistics, the Learner Information System of the DepEd shall indicate if a learner is a Muslim Filipino.

SEC. 15. The ALIVE Program Advisory Council – The ALIVE Program Advisory Council is hereby created composed of the following:

- a. Undersecretary for Madaris as Chair,
- b. Representative from the House of Representatives as Co-Chair,
- c. Representative from the Senate of the Philippines as Co-Chair, and
- d. Representatives from NCMF, TESDA, and CHED as members.

The Council shall have the following functions:

- a. Represent Muslim Filipino learners, Asatidz, private Madaris, and their respective organizations, and participate in consultative meetings of the DepEd and other organizations in the formulation of policies, plans, strategies, educational programs, rules, regulations, guidelines, and other regulatory changes;

- b. Conduct research and policy studies on the ALIVE Program;
- c. Participate in crafting, amending, or updating the roadmap referred to in Section 9 of this Act, and monitor and evaluate its implementation;
- d. Monitor and assess the implementation of the ALIVE Program as provided in this Act;
- e. Review existing and recommend new legislation to promote the educational welfare of Muslim Filipino learners; and
- f. Perform other similar functions as may be necessary.

SEC. 16. Learning Continuity; Equivalency – The DepEd in collaboration with the NCMF, CHED, and TESDA, shall establish programs to ensure the integration of the teaching of Islamic Studies and Arabic Language with higher and technical-vocational education system towards continuity of learning and creation of opportunity for basic education graduates in the country to harness their potential, pursue higher education, or seek employment.

The CHED, PRC, and other relevant government agencies shall likewise develop and implement a system of recognition, certification, accreditation or equivalency of degrees and programs earned by Muslim Filipino graduates from institutions of higher learning outside the Philippines.

SEC. 17. Authority to Receive Donations and Grants – The DepEd through the OME, may accept any donation, in cash or in kind, whether local or foreign, which may be made by individuals or organizations, public or private, which shall be used for the implementation of the ALIVE Program as provided for in this Act.

SEC. 18. Tax Incentives – Any donations in cash or in kind, made by private individuals or organizations, whether local or foreign, received by the DepEd through the OME for purposes of implementing the ALIVE Program, shall be exempt from donor's tax, the cost of which shall be considered as an allowable deduction from the gross income in the computation of the income tax of the donor in accordance with the provisions of the National Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

SEC. 19. Operation of Private Madaris – The DepEd shall adopt an accreditation mechanism for all private madaris and CRLIs in the country, regardless of their kind, as part of its external quality assurance processes for every madrasah to ensure the continuous improvement of the madaris and for purposes of public accountability.

Private madaris shall be subject to reasonable supervision and regulations of the DepEd and the relevant provisions of this Act.

SEC. 20. Mandatory Review and Impact Assessment; Submission of Annual Report to Congress – In partnership with the other concerned government agencies, the DepEd through the OME shall conduct a mandatory review of the implementation of this Act five (5) years from its effectivity, and shall submit the same to the Committee on Basic Education in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

SEC. 21. Interpretation – The provisions of this Act shall be applied in harmony with any law on education implemented in the BARMM, and shall be interpreted towards the attainment of the goal of “Education for All”.

SEC. 22. Appropriation – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against those authorized in the current appropriations of the DepEd. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the budget of the DepEd as a separate line item in the General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SEC. 23. Implementing Rules and Regulations – Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, the NCMF, and other relevant government agencies, and other education stakeholders, shall issue the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The IRR issued pursuant to this section shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

SEC. 24. Transitory Provisions – All existing madaris in the country, whether established or operating pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No. 10533 or the “Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013”, DepEd issuances, rules and regulations, and other laws shall continue to operate pursuant to, and shall be regulated by, the provisions of this Act and its IRR, and other applicable laws.

SEC. 25. Separability Clause – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 26. Repealing Clause – All other laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof, which are contrary to, or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 27. Effectivity – Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,