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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **3292**

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**Introduced by AKBAYAN Representative Tomasito S. Villarin and
1-PACMAN Representatives Michael L. Romero, PhD. and
Enrico A. Pineda**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the 2013 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), one out of ten Filipino children was out-of-school in 2013. This translates to about 4 million youth according to the survey that covered around 36 million population aged 6 to 24 years.

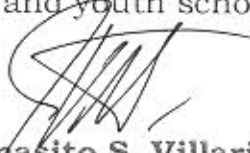
The same survey revealed that in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) out-of-school youth is at 14.4% - the highest across regions. SOCCSKSARGEN, Davao, Central Luzon, Zamboanga Peninsula, Caraga and MIMAROPA's out-of-school children and youth ranged from 11.2 to 12.3 percent. This is higher than the national rate of 10.6%.

A number of reasons for the low school attendance of children and youth were listed by the study. Marriage, insufficient family income to send child to school and lack of personal interest were the top 3 reasons.


This bill seeks to address this predicament of the youth by creating a comprehensive national framework with the following elements:

- 1) Data banking to enable the government to know the total percentage of OSY in the country and where these OSY are through the Barangay Abot Alam Targeting System;
- 2) A program mapping system to ensure that the initiatives and resources of all government agencies, non-government organizations and institutions, volunteer groups, and all other sectors mandated to solving the challenges of OSY in the country are cohesive and efficient;
- 3) A focus on reintegration and equal opportunity through the program matching system so that all OSY are given equal access to programs and services of partner agencies and institutions.

This legislative proposal seeks to address the steadily growing number of child and youth school drop-outs.



Tomasito S. Villarin



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SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. 3292

**Introduced by AKBAYAN Representative Tomasito S. Villarin and 1-
PACMAN Representatives Michael L. Romero, PhD. and
Enrico A. Pineda**

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ABOT-ALAM PROGRAM

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

SECTION 1. Short Title.— This Act shall be known as the “*Abot-Alam Act of 2016*”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.— 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:

- (a) The State shall establish, maintain and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people, the country and society-at-large;
- (b) The State shall encourage non-formal, informal and indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning, independent and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs; and
- (c) The State shall provide adult citizens, the disabled, and out-of-school youth with training in civics, vocational efficiency, and other skills.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.— As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- (a) *Abot-Alam Enlisted Learners* - individuals 15 to 30 years old who are enrolled in any of the programs which are provided by the Department of Education (DepED) or by any of the participating agencies or organizations under the Abot-Alam Program;

- (b) *Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Program* - a non-formal education certification program for out-of-school children, youth and adults that recognizes prior learning. It offers elementary and secondary education equivalent to that of the formal basic education;
- (c) *ALS Partner* - an individual or group, organization or agency (e.g., LGUs, NGOs, private institutions/companies, religious groups, etc.) that implements ALS programs in different areas using their own resources and/or that provides technical assistance or other resources in support of ALS programs at any level;
- (d) *Alternative Delivery Modes (ADM)* - nontraditional education programs that apply a flexible learning philosophy and a curricular delivery program. ADMs may be utilized in both public elementary and secondary schools to address the learning needs of the marginalized students who are at risk of dropping out;
- (e) *Alternative Learning System (ALS)* - a parallel learning system to provide a viable alternative to the existing formal education instruction. It encompasses both the non-formal and informal sources of knowledge and skills;
- (f) *Basic Literacy Program (BLP)* - a community-based program for illiterate out-of-school children, youth, and adults to acquire basic reading, writing and numeracy skills or the ability to read with comprehension, write simple messages and solve simple numeracy problems;
- (g) *Community Learning Center (CLC)* - a learning hub in the community similar to a school, a center for skills development and a community facility for local events;
- (h) *Informal Education (InfEd) Program* - an informal education program of ALS for the out-of-school children, youth, and adults that offers skills/livelihood training or short interest-based courses for personal or community development and/or employment;
- (i) *Multi-sectoral Local Alliance* - the consortium composed of government agencies, non-government organizations, and other stakeholders that expressed commitment to achieve the goals of the Program. There will be a national multi-sectoral alliance led by DepED and the National Youth Commission (NYC). There will also be provincial and city multi-sectoral alliances that will support the Program on the ground; and
- (j) *Out-of-School Youth (OSY)* - out-of-school individuals who have not completed basic/higher education or who are unemployed.

SEC. 4. Abot-Alam Program. —Under the leadership of the Department of Education (DepED) and the National Youth Commission (NYC), there shall be established a nationwide convergence program, involving various concerned national government agencies and non-government organizations and institutions, with the vision of helping out-of-school youth (OSY) through opportunities for education, entrepreneurship, and employment. This program shall be known as the “Abot-Alam Program,” hereinafter referred to as “Abot-Alam” or the “Program.” Abot-Alam shall develop and employ a national strategy to organize efforts in integrating programs for the OSYs who are fifteen (15) to thirty (30) years old and who have not yet completed basic/ higher education or who are unemployed.

An Abot-Alam consortium is also composed of other agencies and organizations with expressed commitment to achieve the goals of the Program.

More specifically, the Program aims to:

- a) Create a comprehensive database of OSYs in the country by organizing a barangay OSY targeting system;
- b) Unify the efforts and resources of all agencies and organizations directed to solving the problem of OSY in the country; and
- c) Ensure that all OSYs have access to programs and services of different agencies and organizations.

SEC. 5. Program Components.— Abot-Alam shall have the following program components: (a) Organization, (b) Preparation, (c) Implementation, (d) Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) and (e) Management and Assessment.

SEC. 6. Organization Component. — This component shall be operationalized through the following activities:

- a) Convening of the Multi-Sectoral Local Alliance
 - i. The Division Office (DO), in cooperation with Local Government Units (LGU) shall convene a multi-sectoral local alliance composed of government agencies and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders;
 - ii. The local alliance shall come up with a specific plan of action based on the major components of the Abot-Alam Program; and
 - iii. The commitment of agencies, relevant organizations, and other stakeholders alongside the action plan, shall be formalized through a Memorandum of Agreement or Understanding (MOA/MOU) among them.
- b) Data Gathering/ Community Mapping

- i. With the leadership of the LGU, barangay officials, Public School District Supervisors (PSDS) and Principals/School Heads, the Mobile Teachers, District ALS Coordinators (DALSC) and other volunteers shall conduct data gathering activities to map the households in all barangays and record information of OSYs;
 - ii. Data on children 14 years old and below who are out-of-school must be included in the list to be encoded into the Abot-Alam OSY database;
 - iii. Existing enrollees of ALS programs need NOT be included in the Abot-Alam OSY database; and
 - iv. The data gathering/mapping activity shall be continuously conducted until all the barangays have been mapped out and until all OSYs have been registered in the Program.
- c) Mapping of Programs for OSY - The DO, in consultation with all participating agencies and organizations shall map all the programs of intervention that these groups offer for the OSYs. This will determine the relevant programs available for the OSYs during the program intervention phase.
- d) Program Matching
- i. After data gathering, the DO shall conduct the process of matching the OSYs' needs obtained from the OSY database and the availability of programs applicable for the targeted learners. The goal is to ensure that each OSY (15 to 30 years old) registered in the Abot-Alam Program is enrolled in at least one program.
 - ii. Data on OSYs matched with available programs shall be prepared for necessary coordination between and among the service providers. Program interventions shall be categorized into 3 tracks, namely:
 1. Basic education programs
 2. Entrepreneurship or skills training and development programs
 3. Employment or livelihood programs
 - iii. Matching shall be done through the convergence of all participating agencies/ organizations and shall be spearheaded by the DO and the LGU.

e) Initial Data Reporting

After the data gathering/ community mapping activity, all DOs shall accomplish the Abot-Alam Data Gathering Report Sheet

SEC. 7. Preparation Component. —This component shall be operationalized through the following activities:

a) Enrollment / Referral of OSYs

- i. For OSYs who prefer to return to school, their enrollment shall be facilitated either at the ALS CLC by the ALS Mobile Teacher or the DALSC or at the public elementary or secondary school by the teacher in-charge of ADM.
- ii. For OSYs who prefer to enroll in the Nonformal Education (NFE) programs of ALS, they shall be issued a Learner Reference Number (LRN) through DepED's Learner Information System (LIS). Existing DepED guidelines and procedures in the registration of learners into the LIS shall be strictly followed.
- iii. For OSYs who prefer to enroll in the Informal Education (InfEd) programs of ALS, they shall be registered in the appropriate ALS Form from DepEd.
- iv. For OSYs who prefer entrepreneurship and employment tracks, they shall be referred to TESDA, CHED, DOLE or to other partner agencies and organizations that offer various OSY programs.
- v. For OSYs with special needs (e.g. PWDs), they shall be referred to partner agencies or organizations that offer appropriate program interventions.

b) Deployment of Teachers for the Abot-Alam Program

- i. Existing ALS Mobile Teachers and DALSCs shall assist in the implementation of the Abot-Alam Program.
- ii. In order for the DOs to achieve the target number of learners, additional ALS teachers may be deployed to implement the Program subject to the IRR.
- iii. (c) To ensure that the target of 1 Million OSYs in 2014 is reached, newly-hired teachers or those who will be assigned full-time to implement the Abot-Alam Program are required to serve a minimum number of 75 ALS learners each within the period of 1 year.

c) Capacity Building of Teachers for the Abot-Alam Program

- i. The Division Office shall conduct a training workshop to capacitate all the teachers who will be engaged in the implementation of the Program. For existing ALS Mobile Teachers and DALSCs, a one-day orientation workshop on Abot-Alam Program shall be facilitated. A more comprehensive training workshop on the Program and on ALS shall be conducted for the newly-hired / assigned teachers. They shall be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed in implementing ALS programs through Abot-Alam (i.e. community mapping, organizing learning groups, assessment of learning, conduct of learning interventions, and data reporting, among others).
- ii. The ALS Regional Core of Trainers shall be utilized for this purpose.
- iii. Funds for this activity shall be downloaded by the Central Office.

d) Orientation of Abot-Alam Enlisted Learners and their Families

- i. With the supervision of the Division Supervisor for ALS, all Mobile Teachers, DALSCs, and the other teachers hired or assigned to implement ALS programs through Abot-Alam, shall organize an orientation program in their assigned community or district to inform the enlisted learners and their families of the program implementation details, as well as of their responsibilities as beneficiaries of Abot-Alam.
- ii. Local barangay officials, public school Principals/School Heads and all the participating agencies and organizations that will provide entrepreneurship and employment interventions to the OSYs shall actively participate in the said activity.

e) Initial Assessment

- i. An initial assessment as to the Abot-Alam enlisted learners' preferred program intervention tracks shall be facilitated by the concerned ALS teachers.
- ii. Abot-Alam enlisted learners who prefer basic education through ALS NFE shall be assessed using the ALS FLT in order to determine their literacy level, whether they will be enrolled under the BLP, A&E Elementary, or A&E Secondary.

- iii. Participating agencies and organizations who will offer entrepreneurship or employment programs for the Abot-Alam enlisted learners shall facilitate their own respective assessment procedures.

SEC. 8. Implementation Component. —This component shall be operationalized through the following activities:

a) Program Intervention

- i. DepED shall provide the Abot-Alam enlisted learners with basic education either through ALS or through ADM.
 - 1) Those who prefer ALS may avail any of these two (2) programs, depending on the assessment result: (i) Nonformal Education which offers Basic Literacy Program (BLP) for the illiterates and Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Program for those who have not completed their elementary or high school education. (ii) Informal Education Program that offers skills/livelihood training or short interest-based courses for personal or community development.
 - 2) Those who prefer ADM shall be handled by DepED's public elementary or secondary schools following existing guidelines and procedures of the ADM programs.
- ii. ALS partners who have programs for OSY shall provide the relevant interventions for those who belong to the entrepreneurship or employment track. Should there be a proven need to create a special program for a substantial number of OSYs, the relevant agency or organization shall take the responsibility to create such program using its own resources. ALS partners providing said interventions shall submit the required data/ reports to the CLC in the district where the OSYs were enrolled.
- iii. Value formation shall be made an integral part of all aspects of program intervention that partner agencies and organizations shall provide to the Abot-Alam enlisted learners.

b) Learner Assessment and Certification

- i. After program intervention, Abot-Alam enlisted learners shall have obtained specific skill sets for employment or

entrepreneurship, or shall have been equipped to take the ALS A&E test.

- ii. All Abot-Alam enlisted learners enrolled under the A&E Program of ALS (Elementary and Secondary levels) shall take the ALS A&E test to be able to acquire elementary or high school diploma. The test shall be administered by the CO at the end of program intervention. Those who will pass the A&E test shall be referred by DepED to partner agencies for further certification, higher education scholarship grants, or employment, whenever possible.
 - iii. Abot-Alam enlisted learners who availed of the basic education programs through schools shall undergo appropriate learner assessment by taking the Philippine Validating Test or the Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT) administered by DepED. Those who will pass the test shall be provided with appropriate subsequent interventions.
 - iv. Other participating agencies and organizations shall also implement their own assessment and certification systems for the Abot-Alam enlisted learners after program intervention, as applicable (e.g. National Certification of TESDA)
- c) DepED offices or personnel shall NOT receive any funding in the form of cash from any of the ALS partners. All assistance of such sort (e.g. financial support, transportation or daily allowance, etc.) shall be directed to the Abot-Alam recipient OSYs or to partner organizations.

SEC. 9. Roles and Responsibilities of the DepEd Central Office.— The DepEd's Central Office shall perform the following:

- a) Provide overall management and direction for the Program, including policy formulation and national goal setting;
- b) Organize and lead a National Abot-Alam Consortium; Ensure that Abot-Alam is incorporated in the Key Result Areas (KRA) of local DepED offices;
- c) Ensure equitable prioritization and selection of recipients of the Abot-Alam Program Funds;
- d) Allocate and mobilize necessary resources for program implementation;
- e) Create a national communication campaign strategy to increase awareness of people and garner support from different stakeholders;
- f) Provide technical assistance to field implementors; and

- g) Ensure that pertinent and accurate data are consolidated in a timely manner as input to monitoring and evaluation and policy formulation, among others.

SEC. 10. Roles and Responsibilities of the DepEd Regional Offices.—
The DepEd's Regional Offices shall perform the following:

- a) Ensure that national policies and directions on Abot-Alam are adopted and implemented at the Regional and Division levels;
- b) Spearhead the advocacy campaign in order to generate the much needed support from other implementing agencies, partners and stakeholders;
- c) Ensure that the target number of learners to be given access to relevant program interventions at the Regional level is attained; and
- d) Ensure that pertinent and accurate data are consolidated in a timely manner and program implementors, among others, provide appropriate interventions.

SEC. 11. Roles and Responsibilities of the DepEd Division Offices.—
The DepEd's District Offices shall perform the following:

- a) Spearhead the advocacy campaign in order to generate the much needed support from other implementing agencies, partners and stakeholders at the Division level;
- b) Ensure that all Barangays are mapped out and all OSYs in the locality are registered in the Program, utilizing all Program implementors with the support from the LGU and other stakeholders;
- c) Ensure that the target number of learners to be given access to relevant program interventions at the Division level is attained;
- d) Ensure that school-age children who are not enrolled in the formal school system, as reflected in the gathered data are provided with appropriate interventions; Expedite the assignment of teachers who were declared as "excess," as well as their deployment as ALS teachers to implement the Abot-Alam Program;
- e) Facilitate effective capacity building activities to make sure that all concerned teachers are prepared and equipped to implement the Program;
- f) Ensure that Abot-Alam enlisted learners enrolled in ALS NFE programs are registered at the DepED LIS and that appropriate interventions are provided to them either through formal and non-formal education;
- g) Utilize and maximize the use of existing teaching and learning resources and ensure that concerned teachers are provided with the learning materials specifically allocated for them; and
- h) Ensure that pertinent and accurate data are gathered, consolidated, and reported in a timely manner at the Division and CLC levels, among others.

SEC. 12. Roles and Responsibilities of the ALS Mobile Teachers and District ALS Coordinators.— They shall perform the following:

- a) Conduct data gathering/ mapping activities in the assigned district or municipality;
- b) Encode data into the Abot-Alam Program OSY database in coordination with the NYC;
- c) Facilitate the process of learner assessment, enrollment, and referral of Abot-Alam enlisted learners at the CLC level;
- d) Ensure that OSYs who prefer ADM are properly referred to the nearest DepED elementary or secondary schools;
- e) Ensure that OSYs who prefer entrepreneur or employment interventions are properly referred to partners and that the needed information and data are obtained from them;
- f) Coordinate with the LGU and other stakeholders in the establishment and maintenance of the CLC (school-based or community-based) where ALS learning interventions are conducted;
- g) Provide appropriate ALS learning interventions to Abot-Alam enlisted learners enrolled in ALS programs and prepare those that are enrolled in the A&E Program for the A&E Test;
- h) Maintain close coordination with participating agencies and organizations that provide services through their entrepreneurship and employment programs for OSYs; and
- i) Ensure that pertinent accurate data are gathered and reported in a timely manner, among others.

SEC. 13. Roles and Responsibilities of the Public Schools District Supervisors, Principals/School Heads and Teachers.— They shall perform the following:

- a) Take the lead in the data gathering activity, together with the LGU and other ALS implementors;
- b) Ensure that appropriate learning interventions are provided to Abot-Alam enlisted learners who prefer ADM;
- c) Provide the necessary support and technical assistance to newly-hired or assigned teachers for Abot-Alam, including provision of appropriate resources available at the school;

- d) Ensure that school-age children who are out-of-school are accommodated and provided with the needed intervention; and Ensure that accurate pertinent data are gathered and reported in a timely manner, among others.

SEC. 14. Roles and Responsibilities of the National Youth Commission (NYC).— The NYC shall perform the following:

- a) Serve as the lead agency, together with DepEDin organizing and mobilizing the national Abot-Alam consortium;
- b) Ensure that pertinent accurate data on OSYs from barangay to national levels are gathered, updated and reported in a timely manner through the national OSY database, making it available to all the members of the Abot-Alam consortium for reference in the implementation of OSY program interventions; and
- c) Engage youth volunteers in the advocacy, social mobilization and data gathering activities, among others.

SEC. 15. Roles and Responsibilities of the Local Government Units (LGUs).— The LGUs shall perform the following:

- a) Provide leadership to the local multi- sectoral alliance, with the support from DepED; Undertake local level advocacy campaign to generate support for the Program;
- b) Spearhead the OSY data gathering activity at the barangay level ensuring that all barangays are mapped out using the required templates and that all pertinent data are encoded into the Abot-Alam OSY database;
- c) Ensure that relevant intervention programs are provided to the Abot-Alam enlisted learners through LGU-sponsored literacy, skills training, livelihood, entrepreneurship, and employment programs;
- d) Deploy or sponsor teachers or Instructional Managers who will implement the Program, using their own resources, in support to DepED; and
- e) Allocate and mobilize resources for the Program, among others.

SEC. 16. Roles and Responsibilities of Other Partners.— Other partners, such as non-government organizations and other stakeholders, shall perform the following:

- a) Ensure active participation in the multi-sectoral alliance and undertake advocacy campaign for the Program;
- b) Provide relevant intervention programs for the OSYs registered in Abot-Alam during the intervention phase, specifically for the entrepreneurship and employment tracks, utilizing their own resources;
- c) Deploy or sponsor teachers or Instructional Managers who will implement the Program in support to DepED; and

- d) Ensure proper coordination with DepED in program implementation and in timely submission of pertinent reports, among others.

SEC. 17. Implementing Rules and Regulations. — Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the National Youth Commission (NYC), in coordination with other relevant government agencies and non-government organizations shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 18. Appropriations. — The funds needed to initially implement this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriation of the implementing agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 19. Separability Clause. — Should any provision herein be declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity of the other provisions of this Act.

SEC. 20. Repealing Clause. — All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or other issuances or parts inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 21. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,