

# Education Beyond Borders: Lived-Experiences in Teaching Basic English Grammar among ALS Teachers in Bacolod City, Philippines

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**Abstract** - *This study primarily conducted to investigate the lived-experiences among the alternative learning students (ALS) in Bacolod City, Philippines. Moreover, this study was able to conceptualize that education can be flexible according to the needs of the learners thus, education can take beyond borders. The qualitative-phenomenological approach was used through thematizing the responses of the informants. The findings thematized in the following: (1) the role of multimedia as a teaching learning tool among ALS teachers is very essential in delivering the lessons; (2) the use of Hiligaynon is vital in learning Basic English Grammar. It was concluded that ALS teachers were more flexible, open-minded, and perseverance in dealing with ALS students since the latter are heterogeneous in terms of age, gender, year level, civil status, and economic background. Moreover, ALS teachers were searching for better teaching strategies for them to improve their skills in teaching Basic English Grammar to ALS students particularly the one who were in jail and in the care of DSWD (for minor age, 16 - 17 year old). It is recommended that the ALS students' performance and development should be monitored so that they will be ready to take the ALS accreditation and equivalency test. Therefore, these ALS students need to be provided with quality education beyond classroom.*

**Keywords:** *Accreditation, Alternative Learning System, Equivalency*

## INTRODUCTION

The most practical way of learning is to take the option of alternative learning system especially to those who are working and less privileged. On the other hand, those behind bars are still given the chance to be educated through this system of education. Alternative Learning System (ALS) is another kind of education that does not need to take place in school but is as good as formal schooling. The Department of Education (DepEd)[1] further claimed that alternative learning system can help those who cannot go to school to learn or who cannot attend formal schooling but can learn in an out of school setting. This learning scheme also benefits those who have never gone to school due to varied reasons like absence of a school in the community, the need to work to augment income, disability, lack of budget for school-related expenses, gender discrimination, and different learning style. Most of the time, the reasons are

directly linked to poverty. Studies proved that poverty is a burden for formal schooling and those who can't go to school end up illiterate.

On the other hand, the DepEd reported that the deprived are the marginalized members of the society: the rural and urban poor, prisoners, children in areas of armed conflict, indigenous peoples and laborers. Article XIV, section 2(4) of 1987 Philippine Constitution[2] under provides that "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 the community needs". The Republic Act 9155 [3], otherwise known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 spells out that such education should be made accessible to all by providing all Filipino children a free and compulsory education in the elementary level and free education in the high school level with central emphasis of including alternative learning education system for

out-of-school youth and adult learners. On the other hand, the ALS teachers attended training and workshop provided by the government to become facilitators in ALS instructions especially in jail and remote community. This is the way, to improve the skills and competencies in teaching and handling ALS classes among the ALS teachers.

The primary focus of this study is on how the ALS teachers teach grammar to the ALS students and how they handle, motivate, participate, and inspire the students to become competitive in their communication skills which include Basic English grammar.

According to Krashen [4] the L2 classroom acquisition occurs when learners participate in interaction that affords comprehensible input and output. They have also recognized that higher levels of grammatical competence require direct intervention in inter-language development. He further said that there are supplemental activities designed to focus learners' attention on message conveyance with activities that also require a focus on form. Since the participants are enrolled in the alternative learning system, they are out-of-school youth and drop-outs thus, the language acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language and natural communication in the ALS students are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding. The preeminent techniques in teaching Basic English grammar are therefore those that supply in comprehensible input in a low anxiety or pressure situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These techniques do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are ready to acquire the second language- English, in other words, students are recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production.

The Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS) is eager to update the ALS teachers in teaching the ALS students. Specifically, the study is trying to investigate on how the ALS teachers teach basic English grammar to the ALS students since the latter are heterogeneous (e.g. all year levels in one session and one ALS teacher) especially those who are in jail and in the care of DSWD for the minor offenders as long as they are 15 years old and above. These ALS students can pursue to finish secondary

education as stated in the Philippine Constitution 1987, Art. XIV, Sec. 15 [2].

In the recent study conducted by Mercado [5] he said that 'Alternative learning system' is a program that serves students at any level, serves suspended or expelled students, serves students whose learning styles are better served in an alternative program, or provides individualized programs outside of a standard classroom setting in a caring atmosphere in which students learn the skills necessary to redirect their lives. Moreover, the Alternative Learning System (ALS) is a ladderized, modular non-formal education program in the Philippines for drop outs in elementary and secondary schools, out-of-school youths, non-readers, working Filipinos and even senior citizens. It is part of the education system of the Philippines but an alternative to the regular classroom studies where Filipino students are required to attend daily. The alternative system only requires students to choose schedules according to their choice and availability. Interestingly, his paper discussed on the problems encountered in the Alternative Learning System in Tanauan City. The respondents were the students who were enrolled in ALS Tanauan. They belong to different grade and year levels. He tried to determine the possible problems that the respondents encounter or experience in their school. Then he asked the respondents to assess the extent of the problem in terms of content and instruction, assessment and evaluation and lastly the resources. The respondents were also asked for their suggestions to address or solve the problems that they encounter. The results were then used to discuss its implications in the implementation of Alternative Learning System in the city. Thus, the students experience some problems in ALS Tanauan like the length of the program and course; the performance in the accreditation and equivalency test; and the availability of the state-of-the-art equipment. The problems encountered by the students have implications to the services rendered by ALS Tanauan. The students of ALS Tanauan are willing to help in solving the problems that they encounter.

In the study conducted by Apao, et al. [6] on the implementation of the alternative learning system program along provision of life skills, increased literacy and quality of living which was revealed that the provision of life skills was attained to a great extent. While, the program was able to increase literacy as evident in the successful passers of the

alternative learning system accreditation and equivalency (ALS A&E) test. After completion of the program, the ALS passers improved their quality of living by engaging in jobs or entrepreneurial activities that increase financial stability, participating actively in community events and social gatherings, cultivating a positive outlook in life and developing the passion for pursuing higher education. The Alternative Learning System A&E program in the Philippines is effective in cultivating the life skills of the recipients. The program has improved the quality of living of the respondents as they continue their pursuit for meaning and significance in life. In other words, the Alternative Learning System A&E program was effective in cultivating the life skills of the recipients. The program improved the quality of living of the respondents as they continue their pursuit for meaning and significance in life. It proved that students still learn and acquire the life-long competencies even outside the walls of the formal school system. The authors further emphasized that the alternative learning system was an option for those who wanted to improve their quality of living and rise beyond poverty. Finally, the authors recommend that the government needs to provide the physical and financial resources for sustainability of the ALS program. Its governance should be strengthened to maximize the participation of stakeholders to bring the out-of-school youths and out-of-school adults to school and let them finish their studies thereby increase literacy. The strong support and collaboration of the stakeholders, the commitment of both the learners and mobile teachers are necessary in the effective implementation of the program.

Another study conducted by Fernandez [7] on the teacher's competence and learner's performance in the Alternative Learning System. It specifically determined the teacher-learner respondent's profile, their competence using Competency Based Examination and the relationship between teachers' competence and learners' performance in the Competency Based Examination. The research investigation covered two groups of respondents namely; (1) learner-respondents who are the ALS learners and (2) the teacher-respondents who are instructional managers (IMs) and mobile teachers (MTs). The instructional managers (IMs) and mobile teachers (MTs), who were officially teaching learners in the different Community Learning Centers (CLC) or schools implementing the Alternative Learning

System Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Program for C.Y. 2012 were included in this study. It was found out that no significant relationship exists between teachers' competence and certain socio-demographic profile such as gender and educational background. While teachers' years of teaching experience in ALS, salary and performance rating are found to have significant relationship. Among the learners, gender and distance of residence from the community learning center had a significant relationship to their performance. Furthermore, there is no significant relationship between the teachers' competence and learners' performance. Based on the findings, an enriched instructional program was prepared for the implementation of the delivery system of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Program. The author has identified the weaknesses of teachers' competence such as manifestation of his/her thorough knowledge in the subject matter, formulation of the questions to clarify a lesson/topic, usability of various aids to make the subject matter in the module more interesting, exploration of a variety of teaching strategies in the class, and providing inspiring tasks applicable to the real life scenarios.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study investigated the lived experiences of the informants in teaching basic English grammar who were inside the jail and the possible differences of teaching inside the classroom and inside the jail. Thus, this study will provide information in the continuing innovations for quality education beyond the classroom.

#### **METHODS**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived-experiences in teaching Basic English Grammar among ALS teachers in Bacolod City to learners in jail and to minors (ages 16-17 years old) who are in care of the DSWD.

These aspects of experiences of ALS teachers in their teaching competency cannot easily be measured by using numerical interpretation or any rubric techniques. According to Creswell (2003), [9] a qualitative approach is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e., the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed with an intent of developing a

theory or pattern) or advocacy (participatory perspectives (i.e., political, issue-oriented, collaborative, or change oriented) or both. It also uses strategies of inquiring such as narratives, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies and case studies. Although, descriptive phenomenology is involving direct exploration, analysis, and description of particular phenomena, as free as possible from unexamined presuppositions, aiming at maximum intuitive presentations [9], [10]. Thus, researcher made spontaneous presentations of the particular phenomena.

On the other hand, the act of returning to the informants to see whether they recognize the findings is frequently referred to as member checking which offers that member checking should be used “to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings through taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to participants and determining whether these participants feel that they accurate” [8]

Since the researcher observed the following processes: (1) asked permission from the supervisor of the district to conduct the interview to the identified ALS teachers; (2) confirmed the willingness of the ALS teachers to be interviewed; (3) set the ambiance conducive to the informants and asking confirmation if he/she is comfortable to record our conversation using electronic gadget; (4) after interview, the researcher revisited the respondent to confirm the consistency and accuracy of his/her responses during the interview; (4) the researcher together with the ALS teachers went to BJMP-Taculing and BJMP-Handumanan jails which are under the jurisdiction of Bacolod City for the actual observation of classes and in-depth interviews. The researcher took field notes, pictures, and videos for actual classes in the jails with the permission from the ALS supervisor, jail wardens, and the ALS students who were behind bars; and (5) the researcher attempted to the confirmed responses of the three key informants.

In choosing the key informants, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of informants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience [11], [12]. It is especially

important to be clear on informant qualifications when using purposive sampling [13]. Moreover, this sampling technique is especially exemplified through the key informant technique wherein one or a few individuals are solicited to act as guides to a culture. Key informants are observant, reflective members of the community of interest, who know much about the culture and are both able and willing to share their knowledge [11].

Since the researcher used human subjects for the study hence, the ethical considerations observed. According to Moustakas [14] discovering a topic and a set of questions rooted in autobiographical meanings and values, as well as involving social meanings and significance; conducting a comprehensive review of the professional and research literature in order to find support of the present study; constructing a set of criteria to locate appropriate in selecting informants with instructions on the nature and purpose of the investigation and developing an agreement that includes obtaining informed consent, insuring confidentiality, and delineating the responsibilities of the primary researcher and research participant, consistent with ethical principles of research; developing a set of questions or topics to guide the interview process; conducting and recording a lengthy person-to-person interview that focuses on a bracketed topic and question where a follow-up interview may also be needed; and organizing and analyzing the data to facilitate development of individual textual and structural description, a composite texture description, and a synthesis of textual and structural meanings and essence.

Furthermore, the researcher thematized and scrutinized the nucleus of truth through opportunistic conversation. Probing revealed during informants' observation, researcher involvement and follow up on face-to-face in-depth interview in order to cull the essence of truth.

The text coding analysis in qualitative transcript and video data allowed the researcher to derive connections and conclusions about perceptions, perspectives, and experiences shared by the informants which led to the development of theories. The results summarized the themes and response patterns identified during the qualitative data analysis. Illustrative quotations serve as exemplars of themes in informants' own words [15].

## RESULTS

The researcher made themes through observations and in-depth interviews from the informants' narratives and presented the excerpt for consistency of the collected data.

The first finding (written in bold and italic) from the thematic responses of the informants:

### **The Role of Multimedia as Teaching Learning Tool in Delivering the Lessons: 21 Century Teachers**

The technology era has remarkably changed in teaching approaches and strategies [16]. Multi-media possess an important role for ALS teachers in Bacolod City in teaching students particularly behind bars. Aside from easy access of information in just one click, it is more convenient compared to conventional materials. Since the venue is in jail, ALS teachers may bring necessary gadgets in delivering the lessons. The ALS teachers in Bacolod City are equipped in using computer-assisted language instructions through seminars which the government provided them. They are also willing to explore more in the vast possibilities of enriching their lessons using the latest multimedia in teaching beyond classroom.

Excerpt from Informants' Narratives. There are translations in the enclosed punctuation.

*"...Huo...eh!...(yes!...eh!...). Well, at the rate, that the technological ah update are going now I think it is very advantageous for us ALS teachers na(to have) the multimedia sa klase(in class) para sa mga estudyante (for the students)."*

*"...Yeah. It's... it's more. It's more effective, ah, ah the learning process viewpoint or in the part of the students. It's more effective and it's also convenient and, ah, easy..."*

*"...ah, if you are writing on the board, it's piece by piece indi bala amo na siya(isn't it). But if it's already in the presentation the whole lessons are already presented, ah, in, daw indi bala (not piece by piece) piece by piece just like ah eh, just like ah, if you are writing on the board."*

*"...Huo(Yes!). In it's ah. What you call this, in, ah! That it would be captured as a whole in the presentation kung may (if there is) multimedia."*

*"...Well, as I have said, the learning process is effective, so maybe the absorption as far as the students are cons, are concerned or the... the amount of ah, how much they have learned is if it was 70% previously when there was no multimedia, then siguro*

*subong (for sure, now on) 80 or 90 percent. Huo (Yes!)."*

*(Probably the new knowledge in related area...because you are introducing...hmm...multimedia with them, it can't go away that you are going to present some new information because sometimes, visually, you can see the information that the students could not get when they're just listening to you)."*

The second finding (written in bold and italic) from the thematic responses of the informants:

### **The Use of Hiligaynon Language in Teaching Basic English Grammar: MTB Education**

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) is a free education program implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd) under the Bureau of Alternative Learning System which benefits the out of school youth, those who cannot afford the formal schooling and those in jail as the locale of the present study. Like the famous boxer, Manny Pacquiao took and passed the (AET) under the ALS program. He presented a high school diploma, making him eligible to pursue college degree.

The ALS teachers are consistent and comfortable in using Hiligaynon language in teaching Basic English Grammar to the ALS students. The latter are participating actively in the class at the same time they are enjoying because they are not discriminated in using Hiligaynon. According to the informants if they are using English in the ALS classes, the students are not participating and it seems that the latter are not interested to listen to their teachers because the students do not understand unfamiliar words in English language and many ALS students are discouraged to attend the class anymore. Moreover, this is the initiative of the ALS teachers to encourage students in jail to attend the class willingly. The biggest challenge is for the ALS teachers prepare the learners to pass the Alternative Learning System Accreditation and Equivalency Test (ALS A&E).

Excerpt from Informants' Narratives. There are translations in the enclosed punctuation.

*"...Ah! Hmm...sa pagtudlo sg grammar sg English ya ma budlay gid na trabaho para s ALS teacher para sa akon ilabi na sulod rehas kay ka complex patterns na different sa Hiligaynon pero indi malikawan ang mag use sg Hiligaynon kag English languages in teaching sa class. Yes! Ahh! Kay mga ALS na student lain lain na sila na level so amo ka*

*strategies na gina use para ma understand nila ang grammar. Diri sa ALS, ga use gidko Hiligaynon para hapos sa ila makaintsiende. hmmm... ah! Huo gid eh! May ara ako na dal imakaintsiendi na mga students ko sa gina teach ko s ila... ara sila naga attend kay na sadyahan sila mag sabat sabat sa klase...*

*(...Ah! Hmm... Teaching Basic English grammar is a difficult task as an ALS teacher especially in jailed because of the complex patterns different from Hiligaynon. Yet, it is inevitable that Hiligaynon and English can be used in one setting. Yes! Ahh! It must also be noted that the ALS students have different levels so we need to have different strategies at hand for us to cope with the needs of the students when it comes to understanding English grammar. Here at ALS, we use Hiligaynon to teach grammar. Hmmm... ah! yes, I have to, since it is easier for us to convey the meaning of the word... My students are participating and are happy to attend my class...)*

*“...Huo gid ya naga Hiligaynon ko dapat na gamiton sa ila para maintsiendihan ay kami sa klase sang akong iwakal sa ila. Dapat familiar sila sa akon language para maka relate sila sa ginatudlo ko especially sa grammar eh... Ang...ang... lesson ko gina English ko man pero gina translate ko lang kun sa pamatyag ko kag ginpamangkot ko sila kung wala sila nakaintsiendi sang ginahambal ko. Dasig sila maka comprehend kag dali nila ma memorize ang mga rules sang English grammar ko... Hiligaynon gina use ko na medium. Kag...hmm... ila test mataas kun gina explain kosa Hiligaynon kagga English English man para ma encourage man sila mag English bisan amat amat lang.*

*(Yes! I should use Hiligaynon in my class for clearer understanding of what I am discussing to my class. My students should familiar with my language use so that my students can relate when I am teaching grammar eh... The...the... my lesson delivered in English language but I translated it if I think they did not understand fully. The students are faster in comprehending at the same time easily in memorizing the grammar rules if Hiligaynon language use as a medium. And...hmm... the tests are high if I can explain in Hiligaynon but I sometimes speak English so that the students little by little will be encouraged to speak too.)*

*“...hmmm...ah!...hmm... indi sila nakulbaan mag participate kun mother tongue gina use kun mag teach ko grammar saila. My students think that grammar mabudlay but if I teach gani sa ila naganga-nga...*

*Hiligaynon kamau ila sabat kag wala sila nahuya mag participate sa klase kag indi gali mabudlay mag learn English grammar kay may interest sila mag learn permi...”*

*(hmmm...ah!...hmm... they did not fear in participating if the mother tongue used in teaching grammar to students. They think that the grammar is difficult however, if Hiligaynon language is used, they learned how to answer the questions without hesitation and realized that learning English grammar is always interesting...)*

## **Discussions**

The first finding explained the role of multimedia as teaching learning tool in delivering the lessons. The 21st century teachers as revealed in the lived experiences of ALS Teachers in Bacolod City using multimedia in their teaching and delivering the lessons of Basic English Grammar to the ALS students in jail or in care of DSWD for minor 16-17 years old had greater effect in performance and development of the latter. There is a positive affective climate for learning especially for slow learners. The researcher noted that the ALS teachers usually teach out of school youth and in jail as well. On the other hand, massive information is put on at the disposal of the ALS teachers; information which teachers can control and keep contact with the learners. Further, other benefits relating to motivated work improves efficiency, broader memory capacity, time saving compared to conventional modes of learning.

Definitely, multi-sensory is ideal for educational textbooks as the power of multimedia is in engaging a variety of learning modalities (visual, auditory and kinesthetic) which can appeal to various learner styles simultaneously. Because of the interactivity afforded by multimedia, “learning by doing” formulated by John Dewey rather than “learning by reading” becomes feasible. Multimedia allows for the development of more engaging and persuasive presentations. Using videos, songs, etc. allows the readers a mini-immersion experience which makes learning more reliable. In other words, children select or convey the meanings conveyed from modalities to create ideas about the world which contain information that is a resource for pupil’s implication with different feature of phenomena that could challenge prior notions of the domain and provide means to imagine and reason out [17]

Moreover, personal experiences and perspectives of the participants are the opening door to appraise and uplift our educational system particularly in Bureau of Alternative Learning System with the modern equipment and updated instruction through integration of multimedia beyond classroom. Farley [18] said that the interdisciplinary and collaborative art form is best taught by using a variety of media apparatuses and improvisation games. Hands-on experimentation with technical and improvisation instruments allows students to experience a wide range of expressive options, a strong sense of community and a greater leadership role in teaching/learning processes. Teachers are hopeful that through education students who are in jail will be directed in a good path and be responsible citizens of the country. Thus, the ALS teachers present the creative options through multimedia in delivering the Basic English grammar lessons with the ability to connect and engage on ALS students' understanding and comprehension than in traditional way of teaching.

The second finding evidently showed that the use of Hiligaynon in teaching Basic English grammar has considerably affected the performance of the ALS students. If the students are at least interested and encouraged to learn grammar. According to Quijano and Eustaquio [19] the effectiveness on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction continues to be explored and studied until now so the lived experiences of the ALS teachers in teaching grammar take another milestone in the usefulness of mother tongue based instructions. The ALS teachers take difficulty in teaching grammar before when the language used is different from the students' mother tongue. Moreover, BJMP-Bacolod mentioned, the most ALS students in jail belong to lower classes and dropouts in formal school before they throw in prison for reason. However, the ALS teachers have participated in seminar-workshop and in-service training, and have access to instructional materials that are available and easy to use for ALS students who are in jail. This is the reason why, the ALS teachers are using Hiligaynon language to bridge the teaching of Basic English grammar to the students. In other words, the medium of instruction is in the form of the mother tongue where the students are comfortable to communicate and interact with. In the words of Conant, et al. [20] a means of teaching pragmatically appropriate and effective uses of

language in conversational contexts while simultaneously teaching the production and comprehension of specific linguistic forms. The focus intensifies certain characteristics of conversational situations; teach vocabulary, syntax, and articulation as devices for serving the same pragmatic functions these devices serve in ordinary conversation. Furthermore, Quezon III [21] said that a pragmatic approach to language is what is needed. It should begin with changing some of our notions about English; he further said that there was a remarkable increase not only in recitation but also in class participation. He further said that it appeals to colonial nostalgia for a time when we were a thoroughly English-speaking country.

On the other hand, learning is primarily mediated by language. Indeed, when English is used, students do not learn well, and at times do not learn at all. Hence, using English as the medium of instruction prevents students from learning as much as they could in their mother tongue. Student achievement is positively related to the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction [22]. Thus, using mother tongue-based instruction to the ALS students particularly behind bars develop proficiency.

The insights and implications in teaching grammar among ALS Teachers in Bacolod City can be summarized as follows:

- (1) The Alternative Learning System (ALS) is under the umbrella of DepEd therefore, the agency takes an initiative to provide in-service trainings to the ALS teachers along the integration of mother-tongue based instruction.
- (2) The production of modules for Basic English Grammar to augment the existing modules in Communication Skills especially for out of school youth, adult students and those behind bars or jails.
- (3) The ALS students must directly benefit from this program to acquire diploma in modular basis because the students are mostly working and behind bars. The modules aside from Basic English Grammar should emphasize the values and importance of education in their life.
- (4) The ALS teachers should upgrade themselves on the latest and up-to-date technologies so that they will enhance their learning in using multimedia in delivering their lessons to the ALS students.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

ALS teachers were more flexible, open-minded, and perseverance in dealing with ALS students since the latter are heterogeneous in terms of age, gender, year level, civil status, and economic background. Moreover, ALS teachers were searching for better teaching strategies for them to improve their skills in teaching Basic English Grammar to ALS students particularly the one who were in jail and in the care of DSWD (for minor age, 16 - 17 year old).

ALS teachers are eager to monitor the students' performance and development so that they will be ready for and be advised to take the ALS Accreditation and Equivalency test as the same quality education as what formal schooling will provide to the students beyond classroom.

It is recommended that this educational system will be developed through revising and updating the curriculum of the ALS since the education is always continuing with the time and trends. Updated modules should be given attention by the concerned agency to focus in real-life and lively activities for the students to learn. The knowledge and manipulation of the latest technology help to keep students more focused and retain the stored information.

There is room provided for individual needs to be met at the local level, while experiences, both successful and unsuccessful, can be shared nationally to develop better programs all around especially those in the depressed areas. Furthermore, this study serves as a springboard for further studies.

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