

Executive Summary



The Alternative Learning System (ALS) is a vital educational pathway for marginalized learners, offering flexible learning opportunities tailored to diverse needs. To enhance ALS learners' employability and educational prospects, the Department of Education (DepEd) and UNICEF have collaborated on implementing **micro-certification**, a competency-based assessment approach that validates specific skills beyond traditional diploma qualifications.

This initiative led to developing an **Advocacy and Communication Plan and Materials on Micro-Certification for ALS**, aimed at increasing awareness, recognition, and adoption of micro-certification among key stakeholders, namely learners, implementers, and employers.

Objectives

The Advocacy and Communication Plan is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- **Increase awareness and understanding** among ALS learners, implementers, and employers regarding the micro-certification program, its process, and its benefits.
- **Facilitate effective communication and advocacy** by ensuring clear, consistent messaging highlighting micro-certification as a valuable credential for skill validation.
- **Enhance stakeholder engagement and collaborative advocacy**, integrating NGOs and local support programs to amplify outreach efforts.
- **Leverage digital engagement strategies** to disseminate information widely through social media and online platforms.
- **Recognize and support stakeholder contributions**, particularly implementers who guide learners, employers who provide opportunities, and learners who pursue certification.

Methodology

The advocacy campaign followed a multi-phase approach, leveraging **Human-Centered Design (HCD)** and the **Behavior Change Wheel (BCW)** framework to tailor communication strategies effectively. The methodology included:

- **Stakeholder engagement** through interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys to understand perceptions and expectations.
- **Content co-creation** with learners, implementers, and employers to ensure relevance and accessibility.
- **Targeted behavioral change strategies** aligned with different readiness levels, from awareness-building to sustained advocacy.
- **Digital and community-based outreach** to maximize impact and reach.

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Key Findings

ALS Learners

- View ALS as a **second-chance education opportunity** and highly value micro-certification as proof of skill competency.
- Seek **vocational training, digital skills, and entrepreneurship education.**
- Prefer communication through **bulletins, peer interactions, and digital platforms.**
- Encounter challenges such as **limited job opportunities and financial constraints.**
- Suggested improvements include incorporating **native-language content** for better understanding.

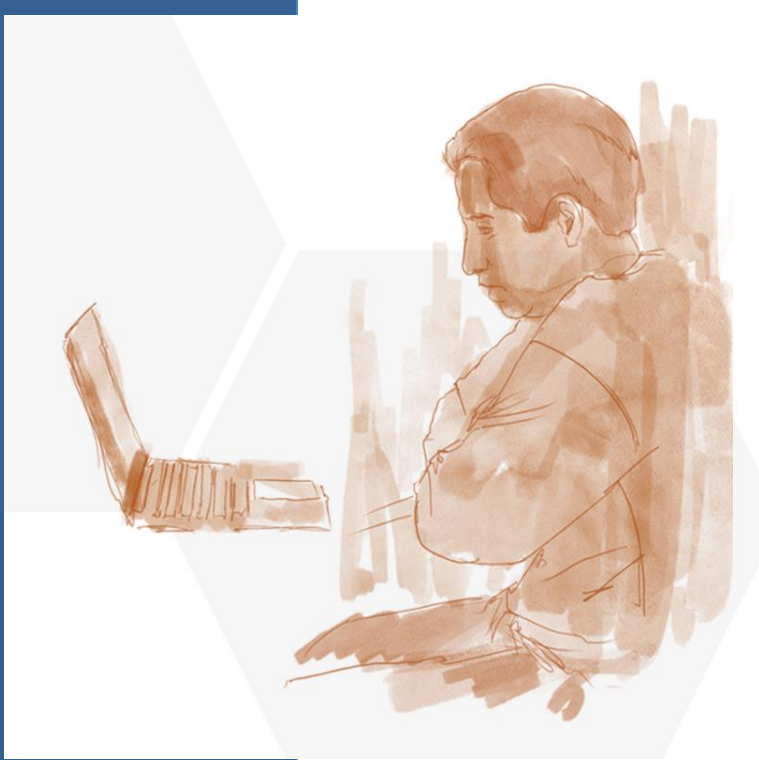
ALS Implementers

- Play a **critical role in program execution**, requiring adequate training, resources, and institutional support.
- Highlight **geographical and logistical barriers** as key challenges in reaching learners.
- View micro-certification as a **valuable validation tool** that enhances learners' employability.
- Advocate for **localized and culturally relevant advocacy materials.**

Employers

- Recognize ALS micro-certification as a **supplementary credential** but not a substitute for formal education.
- Value-certified learners for their **strong work ethic, adaptability, and commitment.**
- Express interest in **leadership, digital proficiency, and critical thinking skills** among ALS graduates.
- Recommend **structured industry partnerships** to increase hiring potential.

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Recommendations

1. Strengthen Advocacy & Awareness Campaigns

- Develop **multi-channel communication strategies** using social media, infographics, and community events.
- Implement **peer-to-peer advocacy** where certified learners mentor new participants.

2. Enhance Micro-Certification Training & Implementation

- Provide **technical assistance and incentives** for ALS implementers.
- Ensure **consistent micro-certification frameworks** aligned with industry needs.

3. Expand Employer Engagement & Industry Partnerships

- Encourage **private sector collaborations** to validate and recognize micro-certifications.
- Establish **career placement programs** connecting ALS graduates with employers.

4. Ensure Digital and Community Accessibility

- Leverage **mobile and online learning platforms** to expand access.
- Localize materials in **regional dialects** to improve comprehension.

Conclusion

The ALS micro-certification initiative represents a transformative step toward inclusive, skills-based education. Micro-certification can bridge educational gaps, improve employability, and empower ALS learners to achieve their aspirations by fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration, leveraging digital tools, and strengthening advocacy efforts. Sustained commitment from **learners, implementers, employers, and policymakers** is essential to the program's long-term success and impact.