

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**NINETEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 3720**



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**Introduced by HONORABLE REX GATCHALIAN**

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

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Its rich history has blessed the Philippines with diverse traditions, heritage, and ethnolinguistic groups, among others. One facet of Philippine society comprises Muslim Filipinos. In recognition of their distinct culture, the Department of Education (DepEd) has provided initiatives to promote the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program, such as (1) issuance of a standard curriculum for elementary public schools and private *madaris*<sup>1</sup>; (2) implementation of the Basic Education Madrasah Programs for Muslim Out-of-School Youth and Adults as a response to the call for global commitment for the Education for All Program<sup>2</sup>; and (3) implementation of Madrasah Education Program (MEP) in the K to 12 Basic Education Program.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, DepEd has faced various challenges in implementing the ALIVE Program regarding Islamic knowledge, curriculum implementation or contextualization, teachers' training, availability of instructional materials and school facilities, and low and delayed allowance or salary, among others. Furthermore, learners who finished basic education in traditional *madaris* without the DepEd-prescribed basic education curriculum do not possess the expected

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<sup>1</sup> DEPED Order No. 51 (2004); *Madaris* may be schools, colleges, educational institutions, particularly Muslim schools where religious instructions are given.

<sup>2</sup> DEPED Order No. 57 (2010).

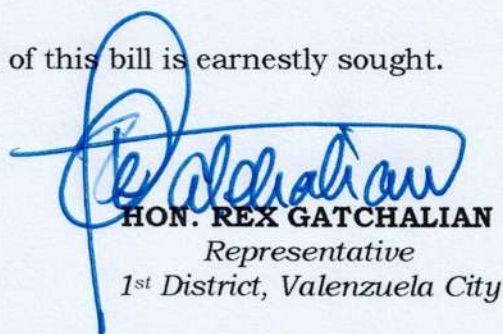
<sup>3</sup> DEPED Order No. 41 (2017).

competencies of basic education graduates since they were not trained and prepared for the required employment and entrepreneurship skills. It is also worth noting that the Philippines has no existing universities and colleges where *madaris* graduates proficient in Arabic could enroll for higher education.

This measure seeks to amplify DepEd's noble and apt initiative by institutionalizing and strengthening the ALIVE Program in all public and private basic education schools outside the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and make it a vital component of the national education system. This measure further mandates:

- (1) The provision of facilities, school furniture, and equipment, relevant textbooks, and instructional materials, and recruitment and training or capacity-building of *asatidz* to include training of trainers, supervisors, and administrators, and technical and financial educational assistance to DepEd-accredited or recognized private *madaris*;
- (2) The crafting of a multi-year roadmap for the ALIVE Program, which shall serve as a guide to government agencies and private stakeholders for the optimal realization of the objectives of this proposed measure;
- (3) The creation of the ALIVE Advisory Council to ensure the attainment of the objectives of the proposed law; and
- (4) DepEd's Bureau of Learning Delivery to implement the provisions of this bill by coordinating with other national government agencies and offices as partner implementing agencies;

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



**HON. REX GATCHALIAN**  
Representative  
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*Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

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

3  
4       **SEC. 2.** *Declaration of Principles and Policy.* – The State recognizes the vital  
5 role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical,  
6 moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. Towards this end, it shall be the  
7 duty of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education  
8 at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to  
9 all.

10       The State likewise recognizes the complementary roles of public and private  
11 institutions in the educational system and shall exercise reasonable supervision and  
12 regulation of all educational institutions.

13       It likewise recognizes the natural and primary right and duty of parents in  
14 rearing the youth for civic efficiency and the development of moral character, which  
15 shall receive government support.

16       To further this State policy, educational institutions shall promote the  
17 inclusion of all learners, especially Muslim Filipinos, in programs that preserve their  
18 unique culture which includes the teaching of Arabic Language and Islamic Values.  
19 Such programs shall serve as instruments for their maximum participation in

1 national development and ensuring their involvement in achieving national unity in  
2 diversity among Muslim and non-Filipino learners and the country as a whole.

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

5 a. Institutionalize an effective and efficient program in the basic education  
6 system of the country that promotes, strengthens, respects and preserves the Muslim  
7 Filipinos' distinct historical identity, culture, customs, and traditions;

8 b. Strengthen the existing Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education  
9 Program and make it a vital component of the national education system;

10 c. Ensure the contribution of Muslim Filipinos to national goals and  
11 aspirations aimed at making them partners in nation-building;

12 d. Recognize Muslim Filipinos whose values and competencies enable them  
13 to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to building the nation; and

14 e. Qualify and capacitate competent teachers of Arabic Language and Islamic  
15 Values Education.

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

17 a. *Arabic Language* is the language of the Arabs as formally and grammatically  
18 taught under the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education Program.

19 b. *Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education* refers to programs  
20 implemented in public and private schools that aim to provide additional subjects on  
21 Arabic Language and Islamic Values in the regular basic education curriculum.

22 c. *Asatidz* is the general Arabic term for teachers historically or traditionally  
23 used in most Muslim Filipino communities. It is the plural form of the Arabic word  
24 “ustadz”, a term that refers to a male teacher, and “ustadzah”, a term that refers to  
25 a female teacher. It includes *Ulama* (singular, *Ālim*) and *Alimat* (singular, *Ālimah*),  
26 male and female Muslim professionals, respectively, who specialized in Islamic  
27 Studies and obtained their education locally or abroad through Arabic Language.

28 d. *Accelerated Teacher Education Program* refers to a customized course  
29 approved by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Professional  
30 Regulation Commission (PRC) to be delivered by Higher Education Institution  
31 partners. Through this program, the ALIVE asatidz deployed in public and private  
32 schools may earn a teaching degree and take the Licensure Examination for  
33 Teachers.

34 e. *Cultural and Religious Learning Institutions (CRLI)* are the oldest forms of  
35 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 are 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. *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 outside the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). It shall also apply to learners enrolled in the Alternative Learning System created 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 not be 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;

1 e. monitoring and evaluation system of the ALIVE Program and its  
2 implementation;

3 f. accreditation or recognition criteria and system for private madaris; and

4 g. forging of inter-agency or inter-governmental agreements on curriculum  
5 and standards.

6  
7 **SEC. 7. *Teaching of ALIVE.*** – At the option expressed in writing by the parents  
8 or guardians of the learners, the subjects of Arabic Language or Islamic Values  
9 Education, or both, shall be taught to Muslim Filipino learners as well as to non-  
10 Muslim Filipino learners as an integral part of the ALIVE Program.

11 The teaching of Arabic language aims to develop the learners' functional  
12 literacy in Arabic, while the teaching of Islamic values aims to help learners acquire  
13 the desired Islamic values that would guide them to *be makatao, makaDiyos,*  
14 *makakalikasan, at makabayan.* The teaching of Islamic values must also emphasize  
15 the values of interfaith dialogue, multiculturalism, and respect for differences in  
16 belief.

17 Subject to the consent, in writing, by the parents or guardians of the learners,  
18 Islam shall be allowed to be taught to their children or wards within the regular class  
19 hours without additional cost to the government.

20  
21 **SEC. 8. *The ALIVE Program Multi-Year Roadmap.*** – Within sixty (60) days from  
22 the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd shall initiate the crafting of an ALIVE multi-year  
23 roadmap covering a minimum period of five (5) years. The multi-year roadmap shall  
24 serve as a guide to government agencies and private stakeholders for the optimal  
25 realization of the objectives of this Act. It shall set the overall direction of the ALIVE  
26 Program and shall contain the current policy, practices, gaps, and challenges  
27 affecting its integration and implementation in the basic education of Muslim  
28 Filipinos as well as of non-Muslim Filipinos. It shall likewise set detailed targets and  
29 outcomes for a minimum period of five (5) years and provide the public and private  
30 stakeholders' specific actions or interventions to include implementation and  
31 monitoring strategies, and annual budgetary requirements. It shall be subject to a  
32 periodic review and updating to determine its implementation status and ensure that  
33 the institutionalization and strengthening of the ALIVE Program envisioned in this  
34 Act is realized and sustained.

35 The roadmap shall be completed within one (1) year from the effectivity of this  
36 Act and crafted in consultation with the ALIVE Advisory Council created hereafter,

1 the NCMF, the CHED, the TESDA, the NCIP, the NCCA, the University of the  
2 Philippines Institute of Islamic Studies (UP-IIS), the King Faisal Center for Islamic,  
3 Arabic and Asian Studies (KFCIAAS) of the Mindanao State University (MSU),  
4 other concerned government agencies, and other relevant organizations and  
5 education stakeholders. The roadmap shall be periodically reviewed and updated not  
6 later than every five (5) years from its implementation until the ALIVE Program is  
7 fully institutionalized and integrated into the Philippine Education System.

8  
9 **SEC. 9.** *The Bureau of Learning Delivery as Implementing Bureau.* – The Bureau  
10 of Learning Delivery (BLD) of the DepEd shall implement the provisions of this Act.  
11 It shall:

- 12 a. Coordinate with other national government agencies and offices as partner  
13 implementing agencies;
- 14 b. Promote and strengthen the ALIVE Program;
- 15 c. Initiate the preparation and regular updating of an ALIVE Program multi-  
16 year roadmap, supported by annual work and financial plans, for the effective  
17 implementation of this Act;
- 18 d. Subject to the approval of the Secretary of Education (Secretary), set the  
19 standards, approve, and ensure the availability of textbooks and other learning  
20 resources for use in the ALIVE Program. The BLD shall ensure that these textbooks  
21 and learning resources passed the standard screening and evaluation process prior  
22 to their publication, procurement and distribution;
- 23 e. Ensure the training and capacity building of asatidz and the training of  
24 trainers, administrators, and supervisors;
- 25 f. Implement policies and standards for the use of learning delivery  
26 modalities, including the training of asatidz on distance education;
- 27 g. Subject to the approval of the Secretary, formulate standards and criteria  
28 in the establishment, accreditation or recognition of private madaris and CRLIs;
- 29 h. Supervise, monitor, evaluate, and assess the compliance, operations and  
30 performance of public and private madaris and their personnel pursuant to this Act,  
31 and regularly submit reports to the Secretary; and
- 32 i. Perform such other necessary functions for the effective and efficient  
33 implementation of this Act.

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

1       **SEC. 10. Hiring of Asatidz.** – The DepEd, through the BLD, and in consultation  
2 with the CSC and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), shall hire a  
3 sufficient number of asatidz and create plantilla positions for the asatidz. It shall  
4 also establish a merit and classification system taking into consideration the position  
5 classification, salaries, career progression, and their duties and responsibilities.  
6

7       **SEC. 11. ALIVE Teacher Education and Training.** – The DepEd shall develop and  
8 conduct regular training programs and workshops for in-service asatidz, including  
9 the training of trainers, to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and  
10 competence to teach ALIVE, as well as enhance their skills on their roles as asatidz  
11 taking into consideration the Muslim Filipinos' culture and values.

12       The CHED, under its established Technical Committee for Islamic Studies,  
13 shall likewise develop policies, standards, and guidelines for a standardized and  
14 formalized madrasah education curriculum with tracks that include a specialized  
15 degree in Madrasah Teaching.

16       The DepEd shall likewise strengthen the Accelerated Teacher Education  
17 Program to ensure that there is a sufficient number of asatidz for the teaching of  
18 Arabic Language or Islamic Values Education, or both.  
19

20       **SEC. 12. Special Eligibility; Qualifying Examination.** – For the purpose of  
21 meeting the eligibility requirement for the position of asatidz, the PRC shall develop  
22 and administer special qualifying examinations for permanent appointment of  
23 asatidz positions in the DepEd. This shall include ulama, alimat, and other  
24 madrasah education teaching graduates and holders of degrees or sufficient units,  
25 or credentials earned from institutions of higher learning within or outside the  
26 country, or both, for them to become asatidz.

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

32       Graduates with Latin honors, *i.e., summa cum laude, magna cum laude and*  
33 *cum laude*, from a recognized university or institution of higher learning in Arabic  
34 or Islamic Studies, whether local or international, may be exempted from the special  
35 qualifying examinations and shall be deemed to have met the eligibility requirement

1 for permanent appointment to asatidz positions subject to applicable Civil Service  
2 rules on granting honor graduate eligibility.

3  
4 **SEC. 13. *Data on ALIVE.*** – Through its Information and Communications  
5 Technology Service, the DepEd shall gather relevant data on the implementation of  
6 the ALIVE Program. It shall include, but not limited to, data on learners in the ALIVE  
7 Program, asatidz, list of existing private madaris and CLRIs, list of private partners,  
8 and other relevant data and information that the DepEd may identify.

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

11  
12 **SEC. 14. *The ALIVE Program Advisory Council.*** – The ALIVE Program Advisory  
13 Council (“Council”) is hereby created to ensure the attainment of the objectives of  
14 this Act. The Council, which shall directly coordinate and collaborate with the  
15 Secretary, shall have the following powers and functions:

16 a. Represent Muslim Filipino learners, asatidz, private madaris, and their  
17 respective organizations, and participate in consultative meetings of the DepEd and  
18 other organizations in the formulation of policies, plans and strategies, educational  
19 programs, rules and regulations, guidelines, or regulatory changes;

20 b. Conduct research and policy studies on the ALIVE Program;

21 c. Participate in crafting, amending, or updating the roadmap referred to in  
22 this Act, and monitor and evaluate its implementation;

23 d. Monitor and assess the implementation of the ALIVE Program as provided  
24 in this Act;

25 e. Review existing and recommend new legislation to promote the  
26 educational welfare of Muslim Filipino learners; and

27 f. Perform other similar functions as may be necessary.

28 Subject to prior consultation with Muslim Filipino professionals from the  
29 academe, organizations of asatidz in public and private madaris, organization of  
30 private madaris, and other relevant Muslim-Filipino stakeholders regarding the  
31 composition of the Council and the qualifications and terms of office of its members,  
32 the DepEd, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, shall issue the  
33 necessary orders on the creation and composition of the Council, and direct the  
34 Department, bureaus, and its attached agencies to extend the required assistance  
35 and cooperation to the Council in the performance of its functions. The Implementing

1 Rules and Regulations (IRR) of this Act shall state the composition of the Council  
2 and the qualifications and terms of office of its members.

3 The Council shall be independent from the DepEd, and its members shall not  
4 be entitled to any compensation in the performance of their functions but shall be  
5 entitled to reimbursement or honoraria in the performance of their functions.  
6

7 **SEC. 15. *Learning Continuity; Equivalency.*** – The DepEd, in collaboration with  
8 the NCMF, the CHED, and the TESDA, shall establish programs to ensure the  
9 integration of the teaching of Islamic Studies and Arabic Language with the higher  
10 and technical-vocational education system towards continuity of learning and  
11 creation of opportunity for basic education graduates in the country to harness their  
12 potential, pursue higher education, or seek employment.

13 The CHED, the PRC, and other relevant government agencies shall likewise  
14 develop and implement a system of recognition, certification, accreditation or  
15 equivalency for the degrees and programs earned by Muslim Filipino graduates from  
16 institutions of higher learning outside the Philippines.  
17

18 **SEC. 16. *Authority to Receive Donations or Grants.*** – The DepEd may accept  
19 any donation, or grant, in cash or in kind, whether local or foreign, which may be  
20 made by individuals and organizations, public or private, which shall provide the  
21 appropriate services, facilities, materials, and other support services for the  
22 implementation of the ALIVE Program and the promotion and preservation of  
23 Muslim Filipino culture as provided in this Act.  
24

25 **SEC. 17. *Private Sector Participation; Tax Incentives.*** – Partnership between the  
26 government and the private sector in support of the ALIVE Program shall be  
27 encouraged. Any donation, contribution or grant, in cash or in kind, whether local  
28 or foreign, which may be made by individuals and organizations, including private  
29 entities, which shall provide the appropriate services, facilities, materials, and  
30 delivery support services for the promotion and development of the ALIVE Program,  
31 shall be exempt from the donor's tax and the cost of which shall be considered as an  
32 allowable deduction from the gross income in the computation of the income tax of

1 the donor in accordance with the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code  
2 of 1997, as amended.

3  
4 **SEC. 18.** *Operation of Private Madaris.* – The DepEd shall adopt an  
5 accreditation mechanism for all private madaris and CRLIs in the country, regardless  
6 of their kind, as part of its external quality assurance process for every madrasah to  
7 ensure the continuous improvement of the madaris and for purposes of public  
8 accountability. They shall be subject to the reasonable supervision and regulations  
9 of the DepEd and the relevant provisions of this Act.

10  
11 **SEC. 19.** *Mandatory Review and Impact Assessment; Submission of Annual*  
12 *Report to Congress.* – In partnership with the other concerned government agencies,  
13 the DepEd shall conduct a mandatory review of the implementation of this Act five  
14 (5) years from its effectivity to determine its impact, measure its effectiveness, and  
15 ensure its proper implementation.

16 An annual report of the implementation of this Act shall be submitted to the  
17 Committees on Basic Education of both houses of Congress.

18  
19 **SEC. 20.** *Interpretation.* – The provisions of this Act shall be applied in  
20 harmony with any law on education implemented in the BARMM and shall be  
21 interpreted towards the attainment of the goals of “Education for All”.

22  
23 **SEC. 21.** *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of  
24 this Act shall be charged against those authorized in the current appropriations of  
25 the DepEd. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continued implementation shall  
26 be included in the budget of the DepEd as a separate line item in the annual General  
27 Appropriations Act.

28  
29 **SEC. 22.** *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days after  
30 the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the  
31 Council, the NCMF, other concerned government agencies, and other education  
32 stakeholders, shall issue the rules and regulations for its effective implementation.  
33 The IRR issued pursuant to this section shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
34 publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

1       **SEC. 23. *Transitory Provision.*** – All existing madaris in the country, whether  
2 established or operating pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No. 10533 or the  
3 “Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013”, DepEd issuances, rules and regulations,  
4 and other laws shall continue to operate pursuant to, and shall be regulated by, the  
5 provisions of this Act and its IRR and other applicable laws.  
6

7       **SEC. 24. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or  
8 unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force and  
9 effect.  
10

11       **SEC. 25. *Repealing Clause.*** – All other laws, executive orders, presidential  
12 decrees, administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof  
13 contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or  
14 amended accordingly.  
15

16       **SEC. 26. *Effectivity.*** – Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this Act  
17 shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a  
18 newspaper of general circulation.  
19

20       *Approved,*