



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. **3039**



Introduced by Representatives **ZIAUR-RAHMAN "ZIA" ALONTO ADIONG** and **YASSER ALONTO BALINDONG**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine Constitution protects the rights of people to quality education and promotes understanding and camaraderie amongst its citizens for a progressive nation. Therefore, this bill seeks to institutionalize the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program in public and private schools. The students, especially the Muslim Filipinos outside the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), are given the opportunity to learn the Arabic language and Islamic values to understand their beliefs and develop a moral compass through correct information and proper avenues of learning.

The institutionalization kindles kinship and awareness amongst Muslim and Non-Muslim students because it encourages healthy dialogues to promote understanding and lessen fear and prejudice against the Muslim community. Understanding oneself and one's beliefs and a sense of recognition and belongingness encourages participation in productive efforts for community and nation-building.

The bill also seeks to improve the implementation of the ALIVE Program to provide standard service and facilities and adequate learning materials to students. The instructors will be screened to ensure students learn from qualified, knowledgeable teachers who educate and inspire young minds. Moreover, religious instructors can experience and assimilate into the academic environment in schools. Through the bill, the ALIVE Program can be continuously improved and kept in check through timely reviews to ensure that the program is well-managed, resources are all accounted for, and students truly learn and appreciate the program.

Therefore, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

REP. ZIAUR-RAHMAN ALONTO ADIONG

1st District, Lanao del Sur

REP. YASSER ALONTO BALINDONG

2nd District, Lanao del Sur



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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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HOUSE BILL NO. 3089

Introduced by Representatives
ZIAUR-RAHMAN "ZIA" ALONTO ADIONG and YASSER ALONTO BALINDONG

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

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

Sec. 1. Title.

This Act shall be known as the "Arabic Language and Islamic Values Basic Education Act of 2023".

Sec 2. Declaration of State Policy.

The integral role of the youth in nation-building is duly acknowledged and upheld by the State, which actively fosters their physical, cultural, moral, and spiritual well-being. In full recognition of this fundamental principle, it becomes the responsibility of the State to promote and safeguard the youth's inherent right to receive education that is of high quality, comprehensive in scope, and inclusive in nature, while simultaneously honoring and respecting their cultural heritage.

In pursuit of this overarching State policy, educational institutions are mandated to create an inclusive environment that embraces the diversity of learners, particularly Muslim Filipinos, and facilitates programs that effectively preserve their distinct cultural identities. These programs should not only impart knowledge but also employ the language native to their respective cultures, such as the Arabic Language, as a means to enhance their educational experience.

By prioritizing the educational needs and cultural preservation of all learners, the State seeks to empower the youth, foster their holistic development, and equip them with the necessary tools to actively contribute to the nation's progress and prosperity. It is through the recognition and accommodation of diverse cultural backgrounds that the State endeavors to create an inclusive educational landscape that embraces the richness of our cultural heritage.

Sec. 3. Objectives.

This Act aims to achieve the following objectives:

- a. Establish a robust and streamlined program within the country's basic education system that effectively promotes, strengthens, and honors the unique historical identity, culture, customs, and traditions of Muslim Filipinos while ensuring efficiency and effectiveness;
- b. Enhance and fortify the current Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education Program, elevating it to an indispensable element of the national education system;
- c. Secure the active participation of Muslim Filipinos in the pursuit of national objectives and aspirations, fostering their role as equal partners in the process of nation-building;
- d. Acknowledge the valuable contributions of Muslim Filipinos, recognizing their exceptional values and competencies that empower them to unlock their utmost potential and make significant contributions towards nation-building; and,
- e. Certify and empower proficient educators of the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education, equipping them with the necessary qualifications and capacities to deliver high-quality instruction in these fields.

Sec. 4. Definition of Terms.

As used in this Act:

- a. Arabic Language is the language of the Arabs as formally and grammatically taught under the Arabic Language and Islamic Value Education Program.
- b. Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education refers to programs implemented in public and private schools that aim to provide additional subjects on Arabic Language and Islamic Values in the regular basic education curriculum.
- c. Asatidz is the general Arabic term for teachers historically or traditionally used in most Muslim Filipino communities.
- d. Accelerated Teacher Education Program refers to a customized course approved by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to be delivered by Higher Education Institution partners.
- e. Cultural and Religious Learning Institutions (CRLI) are the oldest forms of learning in the Philippines which teach Muslim Filipinos their culture, customs, beliefs, and practices.
- 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.

h. Private madaris refer to private schools or providers of madrasah education.

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;
- e. Monitoring and evaluation system of the ALIVE Program and its implementation;
- f. Accreditation or recognition criteria and system for private madaris;
- g. Forging of inter-agency or inter-governmental agreements on curriculum and standards.

Sec. 7. Teaching of ALIVE.

At the option expressed in writing by the parents or guardians of the learners, the subjects of Arabic Language or Islamic Values Education, or both, shall be taught to Muslim Filipino learners as well as to non-Muslim Filipino learners as an integral part of the ALIVE Program. The teaching of Arabic language aims to develop the learners' functional literacy in Arabic, while the teaching of Islamic values aims to help learners acquire the desired Islamic values that would guide them to be makatao, makaDiyos, makakalikasan, at makabayan. The teaching of Islamic values must also emphasize the values of interfaith dialogue, multiculturalism, and respect for differences in belief. Subject to the consent, in writing, by the parents or guardians of the learners, Islam shall be allowed to be taught to their children or wards within the regular class hours without additional cost to the government.

Sec. 8. The ALIVE Program Multi-Year Roadmap.

Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd shall initiate the crafting of an ALIVE multi-year roadmap covering a minimum period of five (5) years. The multi-year roadmap shall serve as a guide to government agencies and private stakeholders for the optimal realization of the objectives of this Act. It shall set the overall direction of the ALIVE Program and shall contain the current policy, practices, gaps, and challenges affecting its integration and implementation in the basic education of Muslim Filipinos as well as of non-Muslim Filipinos. It shall likewise set detailed targets and outcomes for a minimum period of five (5) years and provide the public and private stakeholders' specific actions or interventions to include implementation and monitoring strategies, and annual budgetary requirements. It shall be subject to a periodic review and updating to determine its implementation status and ensure that the institutionalization and strengthening of the ALIVE Program envisioned in this Act is realized and sustained. The roadmap shall be completed within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act and crafted in consultation with the ALIVE Advisory Council created hereafter, the NCMF, the CHED,

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

Sec. 9. The Bureau of Learning Delivery as Implementing Bureau.

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

- a. Coordinate with other national government agencies and offices as partner implementing agencies;
- b. Promote and strengthen the ALIVE Program;
- c. Initiate the preparation and regular updating of an ALIVE Program multi-year roadmap, supported by annual work and financial plans, for the effective implementation of this Act;
- d. Subject to the approval of the Secretary of Education (Secretary), set the standards, approve, and ensure the availability of textbooks and other learning resources for use in the ALIVE Program. The BLD shall ensure that these textbooks and learning resources passed the standard screening and evaluation process prior to their publication, procurement and distribution;
- e. Ensure the training and capacity building of asatidz and the training of trainers, administrators, and supervisors;
- f. Implement policies and standards for the use of learning delivery modalities, including the training of asatidz on distance education;
- g. Subject to the approval of the Secretary, formulate standards and criteria in the establishment, accreditation or recognition of private madaris and CRLIs;
- h. Supervise, monitor, evaluate, and assess the compliance, operations and performance of public and private madaris and their personnel pursuant to this Act, and regularly submit reports to the Secretary;
- i. Perform such other necessary functions for the effective and efficient implementation of this Act. The head of the ALIVE Program in the DepEd and its regional and division offices shall be a Muslim Filipino who shall be qualified based on existing Philippine Qualification Standards.

Sec. 10. Hiring of Asatidz.

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

Sec. 11. ALIVE Teacher Education and Training.

The DepEd shall develop and conduct regular training programs and workshops for in-service asatidz, including the training of trainers, to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and competence to teach ALIVE, as well as enhance their skills on their roles as asatidz taking into consideration the Muslim Filipinos' culture and values. The CHED, under its established Technical Committee for Islamic Studies, shall likewise develop policies, standards, and guidelines for a standardized and formalized madrasah education curriculum with tracks that include a specialized degree in Madrasah Teaching. The DepEd shall likewise strengthen the Accelerated Teacher Education Program to ensure that there is a sufficient number of asatidz for the teaching of Arabic Language or Islamic Values Education, or both.

Sec. 12. Special Eligibility; Qualifying Examination.

For the purpose of meeting the eligibility requirement for the position of asatidz, the PRC shall develop and administer special qualifying examinations for permanent appointment of asatidz positions in the DepEd. This shall include ulama, alimat, and other madrasah education teaching graduates and holders of degrees or sufficient units, or credentials earned from institutions of higher learning within or outside the country, or both, for them to become asatidz. The PRC, in coordination with the CSC, shall grant special license for those enumerated in the preceding paragraph who passed the special qualifying examinations: Provided, That the eligibility herein granted may only qualify the grantee to permanent appointment as asatidz and shall not be considered as a substitute to second level eligibility unless authorized by the CSC. Graduates with Latin honors, i.e. summa cum laude, magna cum laude and cum laude, from a recognized university or institution of higher learning in Arabic or Islamic Studies, whether local or international, may be exempted from the special qualifying examinations and shall be deemed to have met the eligibility requirement for permanent appointment to asatidz positions subject to applicable Civil Service rules on granting honor graduate eligibility.

Sec. 13. Data on AUE.

Through its Information and Communications Technology Service, the DepEd shall gather relevant data on the implementation of the ALIVE Program. It shall include, but not limited to, data on learners in the ALIVE Program, asatidz, list of existing private madaris and CLRIs, list of private partners, and other relevant data and information that the DepEd may identify. For statistics purposes, the Learner Information System of the DepEd shall state if a learner is a Muslim Filipino.

Sec. 14. The ALIVE Program Advisory Council.

The ALIVE Program Advisory Council ("Council") is hereby created to ensure the attainment of the objectives of this Act. The Council, which shall directly coordinate and collaborate with the Secretary, shall have the following powers and functions:

- a. Represent Muslim Filipino learners, asatidz, private madaris, and their respective organizations, and participate in consultative meetings of the DepEd and other organizations in the formulation of policies, plans and strategies, educational programs, rules and regulations, guidelines, or regulatory changes;
- b. Conduct research and policy studies on the ALIVE Program;
- c. Participate in crafting, amending, or updating the roadmap referred to in this Act, and monitor and evaluate its implementation;
- d. Monitor and assess the implementation of the ALIVE Program as provided in this Act;
- e. Review existing and recommend new legislation to promote the educational welfare of Muslim Filipino learners;
- f. Perform other similar functions as may be necessary. Subject to prior consultation with Muslim Filipino professionals from the academe organizations of asatidz in public and private madaris, organization of private madaris, and other relevant Muslim-Filipino stakeholders regarding the composition of the Council and the qualifications and terms of office of its members, the DepEd, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, shall issue the necessary orders on the creation and composition of the Council, and direct the Department, bureaus, and its attached agencies to extend the required assistance and cooperation to the Council in the performance of its functions. The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of this Act shall state the composition of the Council and the qualifications and terms of office of its

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

SEC. 15. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE. If any of the provisions of this Act is held unconstitutional, provisions not affected shall remain valid and binding.

SEC. 16. REPEALING CLAUSE. All laws, decrees, and all other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 17. EFFECTIVITY. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least one (1) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,