



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. 11000



Introduced by Honorable Jason P. Almonte

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE MINDANAO FUNCTIONAL LITERACY AND HUMAN
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN SUPPORT OF THE MINDANAO
AGENDA 2023–2028, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Recent data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, particularly the 2024 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), reveal that while basic literacy remains high, functional literacy in the Philippines stands at only about 70.8%, leaving a significant portion of the population unable to effectively comprehend and apply information in daily life.

This challenge is more pronounced in Mindanao, particularly in disadvantaged and conflict-affected regions, where educational access, poverty, and historical inequalities continue to constrain human capital development.

The Mindanao Agenda 2023–2028, spearheaded by the Mindanao Development Authority, identifies human capital development, inclusive growth, and peacebuilding as central pillars to sustain Mindanao's economic gains and long-term stability. However, functional illiteracy remains a structural barrier to achieving these objectives.

The 2024 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) revealed that all Mindanao regions posted functional literacy rates lower than the national average functional literacy rate of 70.8%, with Zamboanga Peninsula (59.3%), Northern Mindanao (70.0%), Davao Region (66.7%), SOCCSKSARGEN (65.8%), Caraga (63.1%), and BARMM (64.7%) reflecting the percentage of the population aged 10 to 64 years who can read, write, compute, and comprehend.

Functional illiteracy undermines workforce readiness, weakens productivity, limits civic participation, and constrains the successful reintegration of conflict-affected populations.

Without targeted intervention, it threatens to erode the gains envisioned under the Mindanao Agenda.

This bill seeks to institutionalize a Mindanao-wide Functional Literacy and Human Capital Development Program, anchored on the strategic priorities of the Mindanao Agenda 2023–2028, integrating education, workforce development, digital inclusion, and community-based learning systems.

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



JASON ALMONTE
Representative, Misamis Occidental



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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 “Mindanao Functional Literacy and Human Capital Development Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – Pursuant to Section 1, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines, which mandates the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote functional literacy as a fundamental pillar of human capital development, employment generation, and inclusive economic growth in Mindanao.

Towards this end, the State shall:

- a. Promote and sustain functional literacy as a cornerstone of human capital development, recognizing its indispensable role in enabling individuals to effectively participate in economic, social, and civic life;
- b. Align literacy, education, and training programs with the strategic priorities for Mindanao, including those identified under the Mindanao Agenda 2023–2028;
- c. Ensure inclusive, equitable, and context-sensitive access to quality education, skills training, and lifelong learning opportunities, particularly in underserved, conflict-affected, and geographically isolated areas;
- d. Address regional disparities in literacy, education, and workforce readiness, especially among marginalized sectors and Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs);
- e. Strengthen workforce readiness, employability, and labor productivity, recognizing that functional literacy is essential to job creation, skills matching, entrepreneurship, and participation in a modern, technology-driven, and competitive labor market;

- f. Promote the integration of functional literacy with technical-vocational education and skills development, in coordination with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority and employment facilitation programs of the Department of Labor and Employment, to ensure that training programs are market-responsive, competency-based, and aligned with industry demand;
- g. Institutionalize outcomes-based training and capacity-building interventions, ensuring that beneficiaries acquire not only basic competencies but also applied, job-relevant, and productivity-enhancing skills necessary for gainful employment, self-employment, and enterprise development; and
- h. Support peacebuilding, reintegration, and long-term socio-economic resilience through inclusive education and human capital development initiatives.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- a. **Functional Literacy.** Refers to the ability of an individual to read, write, compute, and critically comprehend and apply information necessary for effective functioning in daily life, gainful employment, and meaningful participation in civic and social affairs;
- b. **Human Capital Development.** Refers to the process of enhancing the knowledge, skills, competencies, health, and productivity of individuals, enabling them to contribute to economic growth, social development, and national competitiveness;
- c. **Mindanao Agenda 2023–2028.** Refers to the strategic development framework adopted and implemented by the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA), which outlines priority programs and policies for sustaining inclusive growth, peacebuilding, and socio-economic development in Mindanao;
- d. **Target Beneficiaries.** Refers to individuals and groups who are prioritized under this Act, including but not limited to:
 - (1) Out-of-school youth (OSY);
 - (2) In-school youth with low or below-proficiency literacy levels;
 - (3) Unemployed and underemployed adults;
 - (4) Members of Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs);
 - (5) Former rebels and individuals undergoing reintegration; and
 - (6) Other vulnerable, disadvantaged, or marginalized sectors, as may be identified by the implementing agencies.

SEC. 4. Establishment of the Program. – There is hereby established the Mindanao Functional Literacy and Human Capital Development Program (MFLHCDP), which shall serve as a core human capital intervention mechanism in support of the overall human resource development in Mindanao.

SEC. 5. Program Alignment with National and Regional Development Frameworks. – The Program shall be anchored on, harmonized with, and implemented in accordance with the long-term national vision under the Ambisyon Natin 2040 and the strategic priorities of the Mindanao Agenda.

Consistent therewith, the Program shall be designed and implemented in accordance with the following interrelated strategic pillars:

- a. Human Capital Development – Strengthening functional literacy, education, technical skills, and workforce competencies as foundational drivers of productivity, innovation, and inclusive economic growth;
- b. Inclusive Growth and Poverty Reduction – Expanding equitable access to quality education, functional literacy interventions, and livelihood opportunities, particularly in marginalized and underserved areas, with the objective of transforming beneficiaries into productive, employable, and enterprise-capable human resources for industry, labor markets, and entrepreneurship;
- c. Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion – Supporting sustainable reintegration, community stabilization, and social reconciliation in conflict-affected areas through education, literacy, and skills development interventions that reinforce trust, civic participation, and long-term peace;
- d. Digital Transformation and Future-Ready Skills. Subject to the provisions of law, this act aims to promote digital literacy, information and communications technology (ICT) competencies, and access to digital platforms to ensure that beneficiaries are equipped for participation in a modern, technology-driven, and globally competitive economy.

SEC. 6. Program Components. – The Program shall consist of the following integrated components, to be implemented by the concerned agencies in coordination with Local Government Units (LGUs), private sector partners, and other stakeholders:

- a. Community-Based Functional Literacy Hubs. The establishment of barangay-level learning centers designed to deliver contextualized functional literacy interventions, focusing on reading comprehension, numeracy, critical thinking, and applied learning skills necessary for daily life, employment, and civic participation;
- b. Workforce-Integrated Literacy Programs. The integration of functional literacy with technical-vocational education, skills training, and livelihood preparation programs aligned with local and regional industry needs. For this purpose, local industries, through their duly recognized associations, and in partnership with relevant government agencies and LGUs, shall collaborate in identifying labor market demands, designing competency-based training pathways, and facilitating the absorption and employment of program graduates, thereby strengthening employability, productivity, and local job creation;
- c. Digital and Financial Literacy Initiatives. The implementation of programs that promote digital inclusion, information and communications technology (ICT) proficiency, and responsible financial literacy, including basic financial management, savings, credit awareness, and entrepreneurship development, to enhance economic participation and resilience;
- d. Peace and Reintegration Literacy Programs. The development and implementation of specialized literacy and learning interventions for former rebels, persons undergoing reintegration, and conflict-affected communities, ensuring cultural sensitivity and psychosocial appropriateness, and integrating modules on civic education, governance awareness, social cohesion, and peacebuilding to support sustainable reintegration and community stability;
- e. Indigenous Peoples Education Programs. In accordance with Republic Act No. 8371, otherwise known as the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act of 1997, the Program shall develop and implement culturally responsive, rights-based, and language-sensitive educational materials and methodologies, ensuring respect for indigenous knowledge systems and practices, and promoting inclusive access to functional literacy and skills development among Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs).

SEC. 7. Implementing Agencies. – The following agencies shall jointly implement this Act:

- a. Department of Education. Shall act as the lead agency in strengthening reading, writing, computing, higher-order comprehension, and inference-making skills.
- b. Mindanao Development Authority. Shall serve as the co-lead agency and ensure the regional coordination and alignment with the Mindanao Agenda and Ambisyon Natin 2040.
- c. Technical Education and Skills Development Authority. For the integration and industry-ready skills enhancement.
- d. Commission on Higher Education. Shall produce research and conduct extension to monitor, assess and evaluate the program, and recommend measures to sustain the literacy gains.
- e. Department of Labor and Employment. Shall ensure the employment linkage of program graduates.
- f. Local Government Units (LGUs) shall act as primary implementers of the learning hub, industry trainings, and job creation in coordination with the industry associations. The LGUs may propose mechanisms and policies pursuant to the purposes and objectives of this Act.
- g. Industry associations. The associations shall maintain an inventory of jobs available which may absorb the cohorts of the program.

SEC. 8. Targeting and Prioritization. – In the implementation of this Act, the concerned agencies shall ensure that program interventions are targeted, prioritized, and progressively expanded in accordance with the following criteria:

- a. Regions, provinces, cities, or municipalities exhibiting the lowest functional literacy rates, as determined by the Philippine Statistics Authority;
- b. Areas classified as conflict-affected, vulnerable, or geographically isolated and disadvantaged, including those with limited access to basic education and social services;
- c. Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs) and other marginalized and underserved sectors;
- d. Individuals and communities who are beneficiaries of government reintegration, rehabilitation, and social protection programs;
- e. Localities designated as priority development areas under the Mindanao Agenda;
- f. The implementing agencies shall adopt objective, data-driven, and transparent criteria in identifying priority areas and beneficiaries, subject to periodic review and updating.

SEC. 9. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting. – The Philippine Statistics Authority, in coordination with the MinDA, shall establish and institutionalize a comprehensive, data-driven monitoring and evaluation system for the effective implementation of this Act.

For this purpose, the PSA, in coordination with MinDA, shall:

- a. Develop and maintain Mindanao-specific functional literacy indicators, including but not limited to measures of comprehension, numeracy, and applied literacy skills;
- b. Design and operationalize a data-driven monitoring and evaluation framework, integrating baseline data, performance metrics, and outcome indicators; and
- c. Conduct periodic assessments and impact evaluations aligned with the targets, priorities, and benchmarks set under the Mindanao Agenda.

The PSA shall submit to Congress, through the appropriate committees, an annual report detailing program implementation, performance outcomes, regional disparities, and policy recommendations.

SEC. 10. Funding. – The amount necessary for implementation shall be charged against the current appropriations of the implementing agencies. Thereafter, funding shall be included in the General Appropriations Act, with priority consideration given to Mindanao Development Programs aligned with the Mindanao Agenda 2023–2028.

SEC. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). – Within ninety (90) days from effectivity, the implementing agencies shall issue the necessary rules and regulations.

SEC. 12. Separability Clause. – If any provision or section of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 13. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, resolutions, instructions, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 14. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after the date of its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,