

A Comprehensive Approach Towards Functional Literacy for the Marginalized: The Case of Butuan City



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Rationale

- Education and learning raise aspirations, set values, and ultimately enrich lives. Delivered well, education has many benefits for economies, and for societies as a whole (The World Bank Group, 2018).

Rationale

- 1987 Philippine Constitution
 - Article II, Section 17 – priority to education
 - Article XIV, Section 1 – right to quality education
 - Article XIV, Section 2, paragraphs 1 and 4 – encourage non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems

Rationale

- Republic Act No. 9155 (Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001) – mandates the Department of Education to provide non-formal education to the out-of-school youth and adult learners

Rationale

- SP Ordinance No. 5670-2018 – institutionalizes the ALS in all the barangays in Butuan City and mandates the said barangays to establish Barangay Centers for the ALS

Rationale

- According to the PSA, **95.6% of the Filipinos are basically literate**, that is, 96.1% among females and 95.1% among males; and this only means that basic literacy is indeed almost universal in the country.

Rationale

- But there is more to literacy than the mere ability to read, write, and count; and that is the so-called functional literacy (UN, 2015). The United Nations defines functional literacy as “the ability to use reading, writing, and numeracy skills for effective functioning and development of the individual and the community.”

Rationale

- In a highly urbanized city in the Southern Philippines named Butuan City, where education remains a top priority of the local government, the Alternative Learning System is considered a comprehensive mechanism or approach towards the advancement of functional literacy and development on the margins.

Research Problem

This study aimed to examine the implementation of the Alternative Learning System as a comprehensive approach towards the advancement of functional literacy on the margins of Butuan City – a highly urbanized city in the Southern Philippines. Specifically, the researcher sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the current status of the Alternative Learning System in Butuan City in terms of:
 - a. Technical aspect;
 - b. Economic aspect;
 - c. Political aspect;
 - d. Administrative aspect?

Research Problem

2. What are the issues encountered in the implementation of the ALS A&E and LCL Programs in Butuan City?
3. Based on the results of the study, what policy recommendation can be proposed?

Purpose

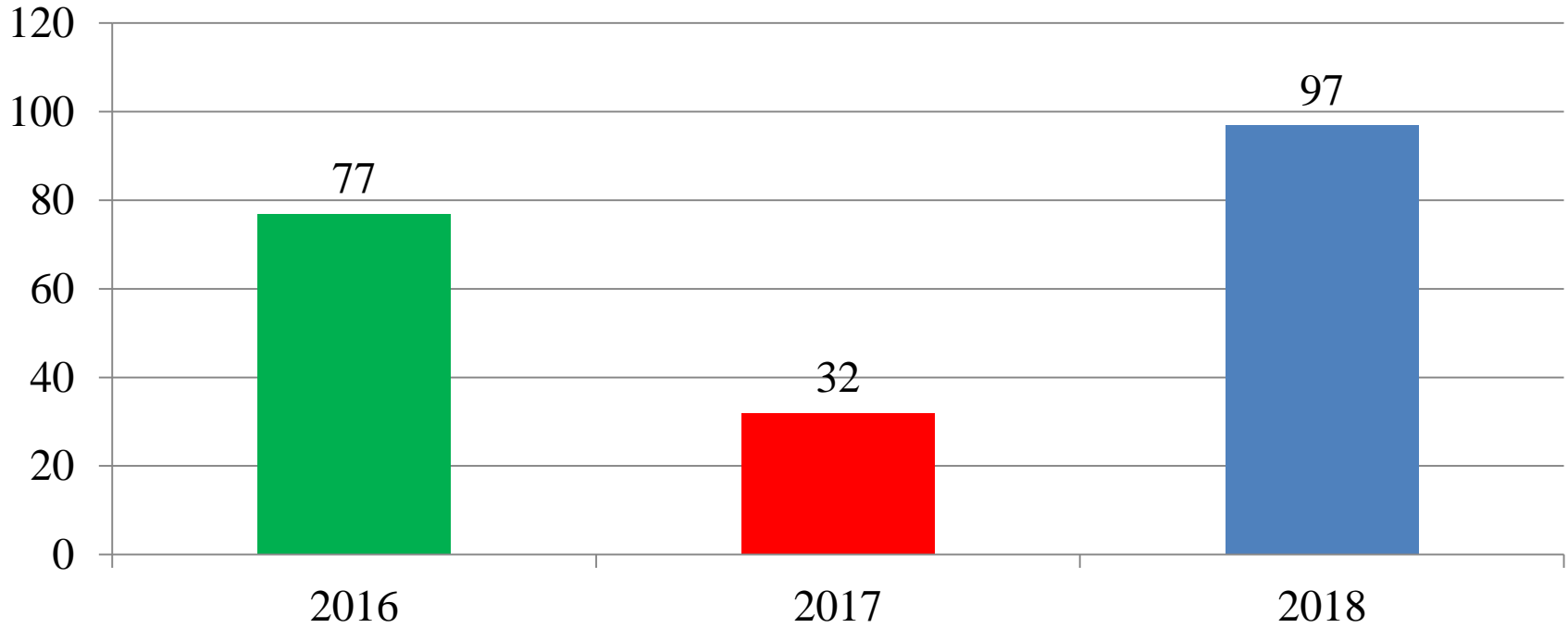
- To identify and examine major issues in the implementation of the ALS A&E and LCL programs
- To facilitate the integration of A&E graduates into higher education institutions and the employment of LCL graduates
- To provide a comprehensive mechanism to address the issues identified

Methodology

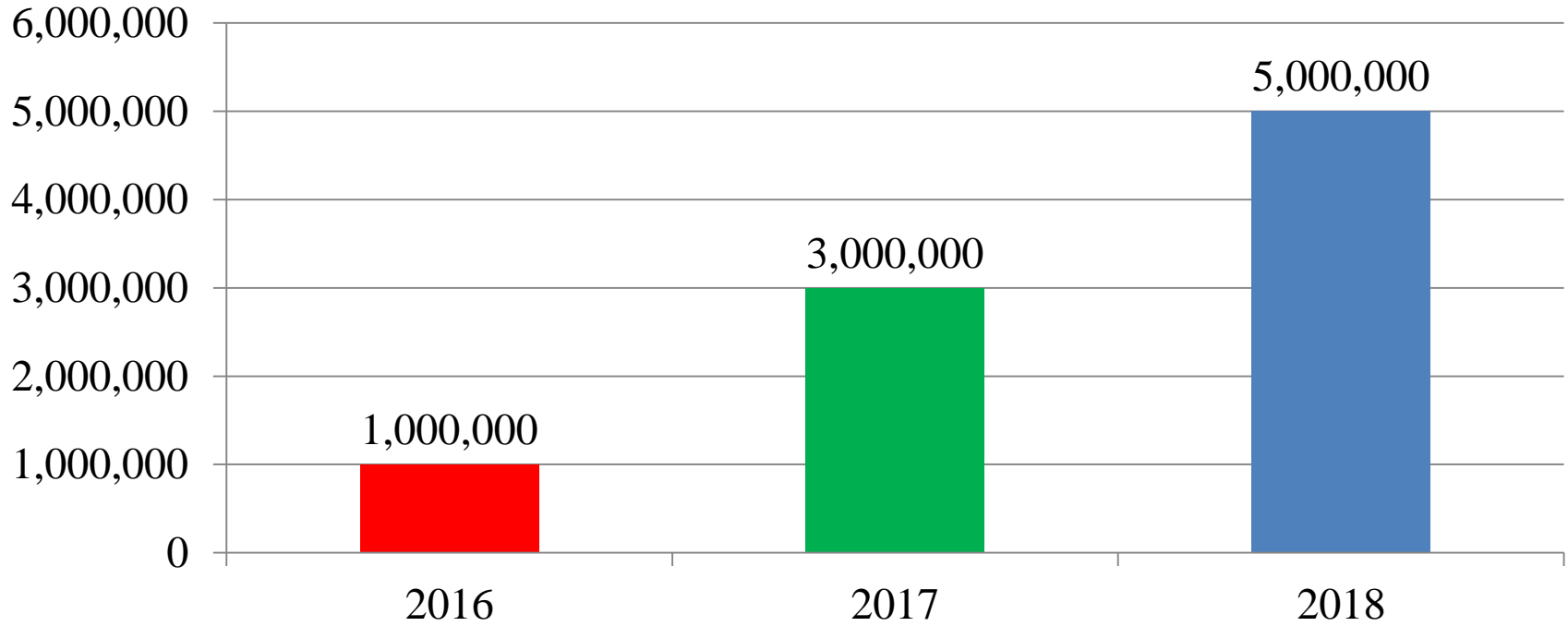
- Descriptive-evaluative method
- Qualitative data
- Interview method
- Key informants – officials, teachers, learners

Findings

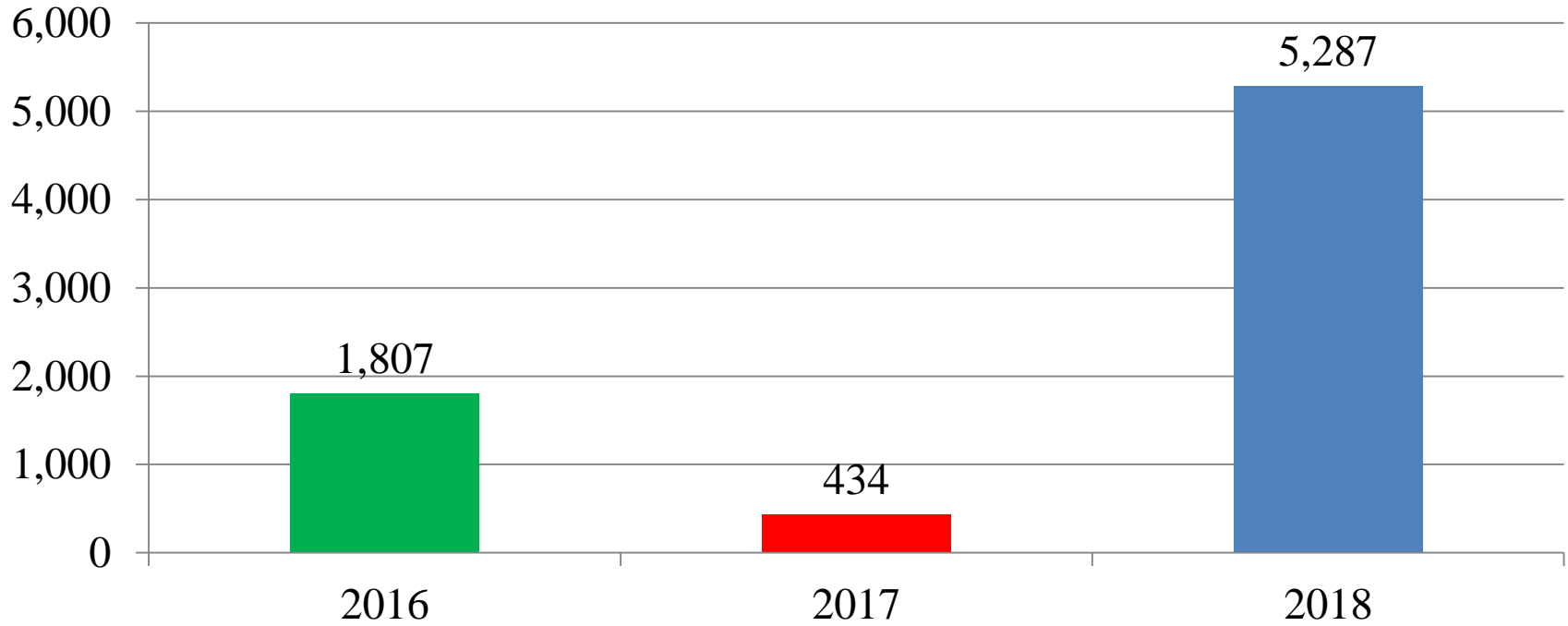
Technical Aspect (Number of ALS Implementers)



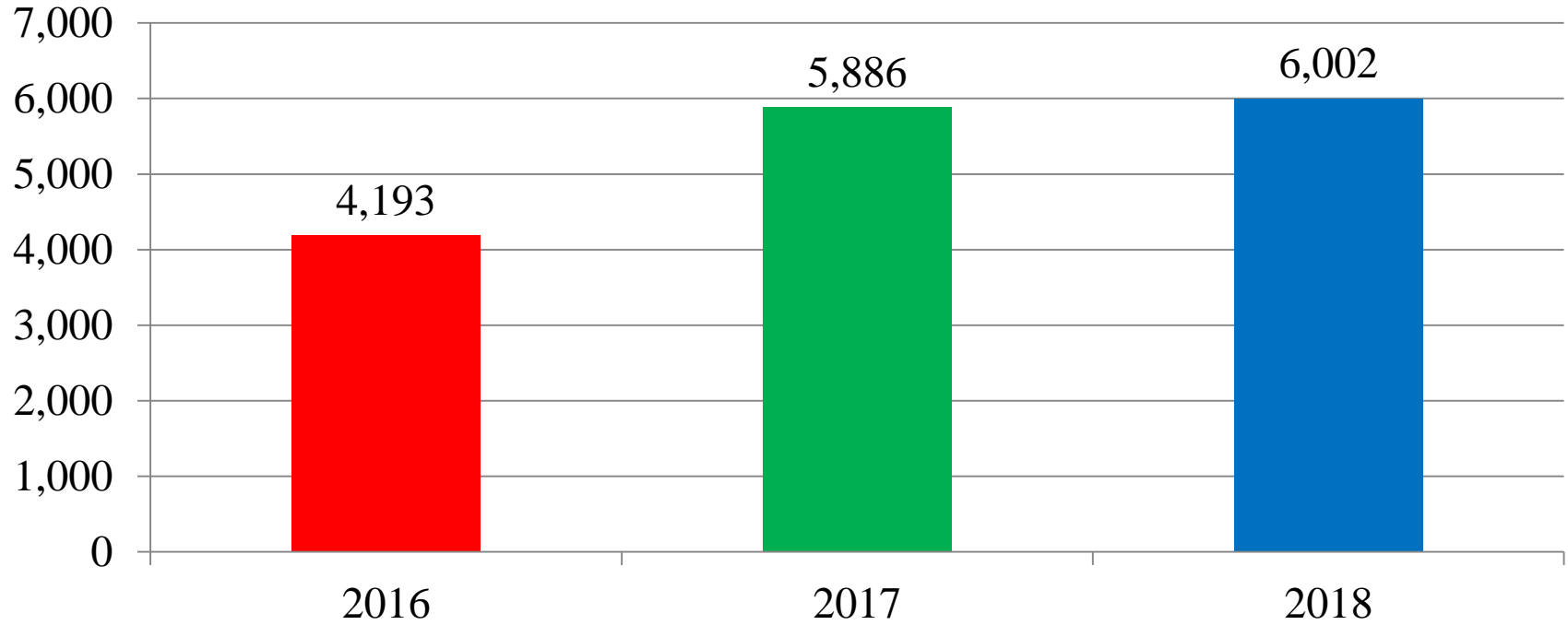
Economic Aspect (ALS Budget from the SEF)



Political Aspect (Number of A&E Graduates)



Political Aspect (Number of LCL Graduates)



Administrative Aspect

- LGU through the City Education, Literacy, and Scholarship Office (CELSO)
- SP Committee on Education
- DepEd

Issues

- 1. Transition of A&E graduates from the ALS to higher education**
- 2. Institutional overlaps between DepEd and TESDA**
- 3. Misplaced understanding of the real mandate of the ALS and the real sector for which it is created**
- 4. Employment facilitation of ALS graduates**

Transition of A&E graduates from the ALS to higher education

- Some A&E graduates reported that they did not pass the admission test administered by the HEIs in the city.
- According to these A&E graduates, most of the questions asked in the entrance exam were not taught during their A&E classes.

Transition of A&E graduates from the ALS to higher education

- Two mobile teachers remarked that it is not the A&E curriculum that should be blamed for the lack of preparedness for college of the A&E passers, but rather the short duration of the program, which somehow compromises the quality of instruction in the classroom.
- Another mobile teacher stated that the A&E Program prepares the learners for the A&E Test and not for college admission, which are two different things.

Why is the issue important?

- As Fernando (2013) puts it, the implementation of the A&E Program will only be successful if the out-of-school youth are finally integrated to the higher education system.

Institutional Overlaps between DepEd and TESDA

- Most of the courses offered under the LCL Program are similar to those offered by TESDA, which results into an inter-agency struggle/competition.
- Some ALS implementers market the LCL Program as one leading to a TESDA National Certificate.
- Most ALS LCL graduates, who took the TESDA assessment, failed due to the huge difference in the curriculum and in the program duration.

Misplaced understanding of the real mandate of the ALS and the real sector for which it is created

- Some of the learners in the ALS are already professionals whose purpose for enrolling is just to earn a certificate which may be used as an additional credential.
- This group of learners tends to overshadow the underserved sectors – the OSYs and adult learners.

Why is the issue important?

- According to the World Bank (2016), the ALS is the Philippines' tool to address existing inequalities in education and in the local economy.
- When a majority of the enrollees of an LCL Program offered by an ALS delivering institution are professionals or employed individuals, the status of the implementation of the ALS becomes problematic.
- Inevitably, this will widen the existing inequalities in society, instead of levelling the playing field between the haves and have-nots.

Employment facilitation of ALS graduates

- Mismatch between jobs and skills

Policy Recommendation

1. Creation of an inter-agency council for the ALS:

“The Butuan City Alternative Learning System Inter-Agency Council”

Composition

- Chairperson: City Mayor
- Co-Chairperson: Chairman, SP Committee on Education
- Vice Chairperson: Schools Division Superintendent, DepEd
- Co-Vice Chairperson: City Education, Literacy, and Scholarship Officer
- Members:
 - Regional Director, CHED Caraga
 - Provincial Director, TESDA Agusan del Norte
 - Provincial Director, DTI Agusan del Norte
 - Provincial Director, DOLE Agusan del Norte
 - President, Liga ng mga Punong Barangay
 - President, City Sangguniang Kabataan Federation



EMPLOYMENT FACILITATION



Department of Labor and Employment

HIGHER EDUCATION



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



TESDA

LIVELIHOOD/BUSINESS



- 2. Institutionalization of partnership with private stakeholders;**
- 3. Conduct of data mapping of ALS beneficiaries in the city;**
- 4. Facilitation of ALS completers for employment; and**
- 5. Facilitation of ALS completers for higher education.**

“Excellence in literacy governance is a fundamental principle of quality, inclusive, and liberating education.”

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