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EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCESS FOR
LEARNING AND LIVELIHOOD SKILLS PROJECT

Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao | Region IX | Region XII

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH SKILLS FOR LIFE



ELSA
Education & Livelihood Skills Alliance

international
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**Ayala
Foundation**

Consuelo Foundation
...giving hope...

PBSP
Philippine Business
for Social Progress

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FOUNDATION
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The **Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills Project Phase 2 (EQuALLS2)** is a Mindanao-focused education project of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in partnership with the Philippine Department of Education, DepEd ARMM and Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA), local government units and other government/non-government organizations.



EQuALLS2 aims to:

- Increase learning opportunities for children and youth through community support for education (community engagement)
- Strengthen capacity for teaching English, science and math at the elementary level (educator professional development), and;
- Improve relevance of education and training for out-of-school children and youth (OSCY Programs)

EQuALLS2 is managed by the Education Development Center (EDC) in partnership with three lead implementing organizations, including the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA). ELSA is a multi-stakeholder, and multi-sectoral public-private partnership composed of Ayala Foundation Inc. (AFI), Consuelo Foundation, Petron Foundation, Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), and International Youth Foundation (IYF). IYF acts as the lead and coordinating partner. PBSP and Ayala Foundation Inc. are in-charge of “increasing learning opportunities for children and youth through community support for education”; PBSP and Petron Foundation for “strengthening capacity for teaching English, science and math at the elementary level”; and Consuelo Foundation for “improving relevance of education and training for OSCY”.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH SKILLS FOR LIFE





DISCLAIMER: This publication was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA) and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
ALS	Alternative Learning System
A&E	Accreditation and Equivalency
BALS	Bureau of Alternative Learning System
BLGU	Barangay Local Government Unit
CCC-NDMU	Champagnat Community College - Notre Dame of Marbel University
EDC	Education Development Center
ELSA	Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance
EQuALLS2	Education Quality and Access to Learning and Livelihood Skills Project Phase 2
IM	Instructional Manager
IYF	International Youth Foundation
LIPs	Lead Implementing Partners of EQuALLS2
LGU	Local Government Unit
LSB	Local School Board
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NDMC	Notre Dame of Midsayap College
NDU	Notre Dame University
NFI	Nagdilaab Foundation, Inc.
OSCY	Out-of-school children and youth
OSY	Out-of-school youth
PBSP	Philippine Business for Social Progress
SFL	Skills for Life
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFD	Workforce Development
SFL M&E Tool #4A	Skills for Life Monitoring and Evaluation Tool 4A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This ELSA report on life skills has two parts: the introductory section describes concepts and contexts of life skills education in the Philippines, and; the main section analyses the results of the pre- and post-test scores on the Youth Life Skills Outcomes Scale, called the *Skills for Life Monitoring and Evaluation Tool #4A*, administered to learners of basic education (BE) and workforce development (WFD) programs of ELSA/Consuelo under the EQuALLS2 Project.

The pre- and post-tests were given to the same EQuALLS2 BE and WFD participants prior to training and after the training. It was administered by the following ELSA/Consuelo field implementing partners. Nagdilaab Foundation (NFI) for Lantawan and Maluso in Basilan; Notre Dame University (NDU) for Cotabato City; Notre Dame of Midsayap College (NDMC) for Pigcawayan, Cotabato, and; Notre Dame of Marbel University (NDMU) for Malapatan (Sarangani), Tantaran and Sto. Nino (South Cotabato); Esperanza and Lambayong (Sultan Kudarat) ALS learners.

The results of the analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores show that there is an overall improvement in life skills scores among the participants in the EQuALLS2/ELSA/Consuelo Foundation BE and WFD training programs. The improvements were most evident in the subscale *Living a Productive Life*, which is Part 3 of the test.

The analysis of the subscales shows that there are differences in the learning uptake of the various life skills. For example, those who received training in BE gained the most points in the life skills *relationships with others* and *living a productive life*. A considerable number of learners of workforce development programs showed that they learned *basic interaction* and *communication skills*.

The results of the evaluation can help trainers in future endeavors to assess where improvements can be made to maximize learning gains in each specific life skill. For organizations planning to include SFL components in their BE and WFD programs, it is suggested that they consider administering a pre- and post-test similar to the *SFL M&E Tool #4A* to their learners.



INTRODUCTION: Concepts and Contexts of Life Skills Education in the Philippines

In the Philippines, the term **life skills** or **skills for life** has a multitude of meanings to different organizations, groups and individuals.¹ The concept of developing life skills among the youth covers a wide variety of contexts and sectoral settings: education, health, business and industry, environment, agriculture, social services, and other socio-economic development thrusts.

Various educational initiatives with life skills education components have been implemented since the 70s. A notable effort to consolidate the various concepts associated with the term was undertaken in the early 2000s by the Department of Education (DepEd), UNICEF, and non-government organizations involved in educational projects in the country. They worked together to “flesh out a relevant life skills framework for children and youth.”² The major output of this workshop was the **Action Plan on Life Skills Education Among Filipino Children and Youth**, based on a “vision of what the scenario for life skills education might be in the future, considering the various forces and challenges now at work which invariably affect the entire educational system and other interrelated institutions in society.”³

The Action Plan defines **life skills** as “abilities for positive and adaptive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands, challenges, experiences and situations of everyday life. Recognizing the physical, psychosocial, mental, cultural and spiritual needs and concerns of Filipino children and youth, an enabling and supportive environment has to be developed for the enhancement of their life skills.”⁴

The Action Plan identifies the following life skills envisaged to be developed, enhanced and reinforced among the young: self-awareness; empathy, effective communication; interpersonal relationship skills; decision-making; problem-solving; creative thinking; critical thinking; dealing/managing/coping with emotions; dealing/managing/coping with stress, and; production (entrepreneurship) skills.⁵

For its part, the DepEd’s efforts on the development of life skills among formal learners and out-of-school youth are geared to:

- provide the knowledge and develop personal development values and skills necessary for living in and contributing to a developing and changing social milieu;
- provide learning experiences which increase the child’s awareness of and responsiveness to the changes in and just demands of society; and to prepare him for constructive and effective involvement;
- develop among the learners the proper values, attitudes, and knowledge to enable them to think critically and act creatively for personal, community, and national development.⁶

Providers of life skills learning in the country may be categorized into the following groups: National Government Agencies (NGAs), Local Government Units (LGUs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and the Academe, particularly state colleges and universities with extension programs, and private schools with community outreach programs.



The Skills for Life (SFL) Program Implemented by Consuelo Foundation for EQuALLS2

In 2000, the Consuelo Foundation Inc. (CFI) became part of a global initiative of the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and the World Bank (WB) aimed at enabling young people to have better opportunities for growth and development. The centerpiece of this initiative is the Skills for Life (SFL), a comprehensive positive youth development and prevention learning program for young people. It is aimed at promoting young people's "healthy development and reducing their risk for compromising behaviors, such as misconduct, drug use, violence, etc". The learners are expected to develop or enhance their:

- Positive social behaviors that includes self-discipline, responsibility, good judgment, respect for self and others, and an ethic of service
- Positive commitment to family, school (learning institution), peers and community
- Responsible citizenship skills and ethical behavior
- Problem solving and decision making skills
- Interpersonal and Teamwork skills
- Communication skills
- Belief in a Promising Future

The SFL Curriculum was developed by the International Youth Foundation in partnership with Consuelo Foundation and its implementing partners involved with work for Filipino out-of-school youth. It consists of 44 sequential, skill-building lessons that are grouped into six units:

Self-Awareness; Interpersonal Relationships and Communication Skills; Coping with Emotions and Stress in Positive Ways; Critical Thinking and Decision-Making Skills; Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution Skills, and; Setting Goals for Productivity and Success.

Each of the 44-lessons was conducted among the learners and trainees for at least an hour under the leadership of a trained Instructional Manager. During the SFL sessions, youth work closely together and explore ways to help young people develop self confidence, responsibility and a commitment to help others. The sessions usually end with guidelines on how to apply learning in the classroom and in real life situations.

The SFL lessons are conducted throughout the training program following the 44 sequential, skill building lessons. The Instructional Managers, who are trained to use the SFL curriculum, schedule the sessions in such a way that each of the lesson is conducted for an hour to one-and-a-half hour and ends with guidelines on how to apply learning in real life situations.

As the ELSA Partner in charge of the EQuALLS2 ALS project component aimed at “*improving relevance of education and training for OSCY*,” Consuelo introduced the Skills for Life (SFL) Curriculum in the Basic Education and Workforce Development Programs of the project, in order to develop the above skills for life and impart positive behavior among the OSCY learners. This inclusion was envisaged to enhance the Basic Education and Workforce Development Training Program offered by the project.

The Skills for Life Monitoring and Evaluation Tool #4A⁷

Throughout the project life of EQuALLS2, pre- and post-tests were administered to the learners of both Basic Education and Workforce Development Training Programs. It is called Youth Life Skills Outcomes Scale (Skills for Life Monitoring and Evaluation Tool #4A or SFL M&E Tool #4A) which aims to measure the extent to which participants “are tapping their life skills and values in their day-to-day life.”⁸ It is a 45-item scale depicting different values and life skills. It is composed of four scales designed to test four main categories/clusters of values and life skills that are covered in the SFL training program, as follows:

- Part 1 tests for basic interaction and communication skills;
- Part 2 is on upkeep and care of the self;
- Part 3 is about living a productive life, and;
- Part 4 covers relationships with others.

Each item in the scale is answered by choosing from response categories **never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always**. As to the specific life skills, Part 1 consists of items 1-12, Part 2 of items 13-24, Part 3 of items 25 to 32 and Part 4 of items 33 to 45. The highest possible score for Parts 1, 2 and 4 is 60 and 45 for Part 3.

Items are either positively or negatively worded. In scoring responses negatively worded items are reverse recoded. The total life skills score is obtained by summing up all answers to the 45-item test. The total score ranges from 45 to 225 with higher scores indicating better life skills.

Four Categories of Values and Life Skills tested by SFL M&E Tool 4A⁹

Four Main Categories	Values Covered	Life Skills Covered
Life skills and values outcomes that relate to upkeep and care of the self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self discipline • A healthy, drug-free lifestyle • Respect for self • Honesty • Courage • Managing emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self awareness
Life skills and values outcomes that relate to basic interaction and communication skills		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Empathy
Life skills and values outcomes that relate to relationships with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for others • Commitment to family • Kindness • Service to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resisting negative peer pressure • Strengthening relationships • Conflict resolution
Life skills and values outcomes that relate to living productive lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making • Goal setting • Higher order thinking and problem solving • Productivity skills

Analysis of the Pre- and Post-Tests of SFL M&E Tool 4A

This part of the report is an analysis of the results of the pre- and post-test scores on the SFL Tool #4A administered to learners of EQuALLS2 Basic Education and Workforce Development Programs in 2008-2009.

The test was given to the same EQuALLS2 participants prior to training and after the training. It was administered by the following ELSA/Consuelo field implementing partners.¹⁰

- Nagdilaab Foundation (NFI) for Lantawan and Maluso (Basilan);
- Notre Dame University (NDU) for Cotabato City;
- Notre Dame of Midsayap College (NDMC) for Pigcawayan, Cotabato;
- Notre Dame of Marbel University (NDMU) for Malapatan (Sarangani), Tantangan and Sto. Nino (South Cotabato), and; Esperanza and Lambayong (Sultan Kudarat) ALS learners.



In the analysis of the results of the test, a paired t-test was conducted to examine the effect of the training on scores in the life skills scale. This means that each participant's pre-test score was compared to his own post test score and test whether or not the mean change in the test scores is significantly higher than zero (i.e. no learning took place).

The analysis did not include the administration of the tool to a control group, which would have been the ideal situation. By delimiting the analysis to the comparison of each participant's pre-test and to his/ her own post-test scores, there is no claim that the difference in score between the pre- and post-tests are solely attributable to the training on SFL received by the learners.

The analysis compared the change in the score, or the learning gain over time across age of the learner, sex, the kind of training received whether basic education or workforce development training.

The tests were designed to be administered to all learners at the beginning of the training and at the end. The data used for the study was taken from all the available test forms that were filled up by participants. Hence, there was no sampling involved, as all available data was used.

FINDINGS

Over-all, data was available on 2164 learners who took the SFL Tool #4A pre- and post-tests.

Table I shows a breakdown of learners by age, sex, course and organization and the tests they had data on. Not all learners have data on their age and sex; 7 had no sex data while 31 cases had no age data.

TABLE I. Percent distribution of learners by type of test taken and area

		Pre-test only	Post-test only	With pre-test and post-test	Total
Age	less than 15	22 14.10%	11 7.10%	123 78.80%	156
	15-19	248 23.30%	59 5.50%	758 71.20%	1065
	20 and over	265 29.10%	54 5.90%	593 65.00%	912
Sex	Female	235 26.80%	37 4.20%	604 68.90%	876
	Male	315 24.60%	87 6.80%	879 68.60%	1281
Course	Work force	64 16.00%	32 8.00%	303 75.90%	399
	Basic education	491 27.80%	94 5.30%	1180 66.90%	1765
Organization	Nagdilaab	115 23.90%	19 4.00%	347 72.10%	481
	NDMC	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	117 100.00%	117
	NDMU	353 41.30%	34 4.00%	467 54.70%	854
	NDU	87 12.20%	73 10.30%	552 77.50%	712
	Total	555 25.60%	126 5.80%	1483 68.50%	2164

Of the 2164 learners, 25.6 percent took the pre-test only, 5.8 percent took the post-test only while 68.5 percent took both pre- and post-tests. The decrease in the number from pre-test to post-test may be attributable to drop-outs during the training cycles. The analysis of the evaluation results is done on the last group with complete pre- and post-tests comprising 1483 cases.

Analysis of total scores

Tables 2 to 5 show the average pre-test scores, average post-test scores and the mean difference between pre-test and post-test by age, sex, course and organization. The mean difference is the average of the difference between pre and post-test score per learner. The average of the difference between pre and post-test scores per learner is illustrated in the following example:

Learner 1 has pretest score of 50 and post test score of 60. The difference bet pre and post is 10. Learner 2 has pretest score of 60 and post test score of 80. The difference between pre and post is 20. The average of the difference is $(10+20)/2$ or 15.

A positive mean difference indicates a gain in score in the life skills scale. In the tables, the mean pre-test and mean post-test scores are derived from the scores of all who took each test, not just those who took both tests. The mean difference is derived only from those who took both pre-test and post-test. The number of cases for each reported mean, whether pre-test, post-test or the difference between pre-test and post-test score is indicated within each appropriate cell. It is to be noted that in the tables, the mean difference is not derived from subtracting the mean pre-test score from the mean post-test score.

TABLE 2. Mean total pre- and post-test scores, mean of individual differences between pre- and post-test scores and significance level of paired-t tests for individual difference by age

Age		Pretest	Posttest	Mean Difference	Sig
12-14	Mean	139.6	145.0	5.5	*
	s.d.	16.2	18.0	23.6	
	N	136	133	116	
15-19	Mean	148.6	154.2	6.8	***
	s.d.	20.9	20.2	23.5	
	N	960	793	713	
20 +	Mean	150.3	157.2	7.2	***
	s.d.	22.1	20.7	21.5	
	N	816	622	551	
Total	Mean	148.7	154.6	6.8	***
	s.d.	21.3	20.5	22.7	
	N	1912	1548	1380	

* $p \leq .05$

* Significant at .05 level

** $p \leq .01$

** Significant at .01 level

*** $p \leq .001$

*** Significant at .001 level – in ascending order

TABLE 3. Mean total pre- and post-test scores, mean of individual differences between pre-test and post-test scores and significance level of paired-t tests for individual difference by sex

Course		Pretest	Posttest	Mean Difference	Sig
Female	Mean	151.1	156.4	6.1	***
	s.d.	20.8	21.0	21.9	
	N	787	620	563	
Male	Mean	146.9	153.3	7.3	***
	s.d.	21.5	20.0	23.2	
	N	1147	937	826	

TABLE 4. Mean total pre-test and post-test scores, mean of individual differences between pre- and post-test scores and significance level of paired-t tests for individual difference by course

Course		Pretest	Posttest	Mean Difference	Sig
Work force	Mean	159.4	163.1	4.3	**
	s.d.	24.8	20.0	23.6	
	N	342	326	276	
Basic education	Mean	146.2	152.3	7.4	***
	s.d.	19.7	20.0	22.4	
	N	1596	1233	1113	

* $p \leq .05$

** $p \leq .01$

*** $p \leq .001$

* Significant at .05 level

** Significant at .01 level

*** Significant at .001 level – in ascending order



TABLE 5. Mean total pre- and post-test scores, mean of individual differences between pre- and post-test scores and significance level of paired-t tests for individual difference by organization

Organization		Pretest	Posttest	Mean Difference	Sig
Nagdilaab	Mean	151.5	151.2	-0.2	n.s.
	s.d.	21.0	18.9	26.3	
	N	392	359	299	
Notre Dame of Midsayap College	Mean	145.6	155.2	10.1	***
	s.d.	22.8	18.2	25.5	
	N	115	109	108	
Notre Dame of Marbel	Mean	149.0	154.4	5.8	***
	s.d.	21.2	21.9	17.2	
	N	795	479	442	
Notre Dame University	Mean	146.8	156.6	10.9	***
	s.d.	21.1	20.4	22.8	
	N	636	612	540	
Total	Mean	148.6	154.6	6.8	***
	s.d.	21.3	20.5	22.7	
	N	1938	1559	1389	

* $p \leq .05$

* Significant at .05 level

** $p \leq .01$

** Significant at .01 level

*** $p \leq .001$

*** Significant at .001 level – in ascending order

Overall, among those who took the pre-test, their average total score at the pre-test is 149 points out of a possible maximum of 225; the average score at the post-test for all who took the post-test is 156. The average gain in score among those who took both pre-test and post-test is 6.8 points, which is significantly different from zero, meaning that there is significant learning gain in life skills among learners as measured by the scale.

There is an apparent age gradient in the learning gain, the youngest (less than 15) gained the least (average of 5.5 points) while the oldest gained the most (average of 7.2 points). Males gained more points (average of 7.3 points) than females (average of 6.1 points) but this difference is not statistically significant. Those who received basic education training gained more (average of 7.4) than those who were given work force training (average of 4.3). The most gains in learning were recorded by NDU (average of 10.9 points) and NDMC trainees (average of 10.1 points), while NDMU trainees recorded a lower mean learning gain of 5.8 points. Nagdilaab trainees in Lantawand and Maluso, Basilan registered no significant learning gain (average of -0.2 points). This may be attributed to the fact that



both Lantawan and Maluso in Basilan are conflict-affected areas and learners are not able to attend many sessions, including SFL sessions, during these encounters between rebel groups and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. These communities are often caught in crossfires during these encounters.

Maraming naitulong ang program sa aking buhay. Di lang ito nakapagbigay ng mas magandang trabaho sa akin dahil ako ay empleyado na ng isang restaurant at catering services dito sa aming bayan kundi madedevelop din ng programa ang buo kong pagkatao dahil mas na set ko ang aking isip kung ano ba talaga ang gusto ko sa buhay at yun ay ang makapagtapos ng pag-aaral at magkaroon ng magandang trabaho. Salamat po sa programang EQuALLS2 at sa mga taong bumubuo nito.”

(The program has improved my life for the better. It did not only give me a job in a restaurant and catering service here in our town, but it has also developed my personality, making me realize what I really want with my life – to be able to finish schooling and to have a good job. Many thanks to the EQuALLS2 and all the people behind this program.)

Jessie Gallardo, 19 years old
WFD learner, NDMC
EQuALLS2 Program
Tubon, Pigcawayan
North Cotabato

Table 6 shows that on a per municipality basis the highest recorded learning gain is 12.0 points, observed among the 2008 batch of learners from Sto. Nino, South Cotabato, trained by NDMU.

TABLE 6. Mean total pre- and post-test scores, mean of individual differences between pre- and posttest scores and significance level of paired-t tests for individual difference by area

Organization	Area		Pretest	Posttest	Mean Difference	Sig.
Nagdilaab	Basilan: Lantawan and Maluso	Mean s.d N	151.5 21.0 392	151.2 18.9 359	-0.2 26.3 299	n.s.
NDMC	Pigcawayan	Mean s.d. N	145.6 22.8 115	155.2 18.2 109	10.1 25.5 108	***
	2008 Esperanza	Mean s.d. N	147.6 23.0 101	151.7 24.1 100	3.9 15.7 99	**
	2009 Esperanza	Mean s.d. N	122.5 17.2 32	122.8 7.2 32	1.4 16.8 31	n.s.
	2008 Lambayong	Mean s.d. N	154.6 19.0 78	163.2 20.9 74	8.2 21.0 72	**
	2009 Lambayong	Mean s.d. N	154.9 13.2 85	170.9 5.4 29	9.4 11.2 29	*
	2008 Malapatan	Mean s.d. N	150.7 17.7 133	147.6 11.6 81	3.8 13.7 79	*
	2009 Malapatan	Mean s.d. N	153.2 16.0 163	163.4 17.7 29	8.4 11.2 28	*
	2008 Sto Nino	Mean s.d. N	148.5 19.1 46	160.3 15.0 46	12.0 15.8 44	**
	2009 Sto Nino	Mean s.d. N		169.2 16.8 17	-	-
	2008 Tantangan	Mean s.d. N	142.5 31.9 50	143.2 22.9 41	6.7 22.4 41	*
	2009 Tantangan	Mean s.d. N	144.1 25.5 107	166.8 22.9 30	-4.6 21.3 19	n.s.
NDU	CotabatoCity	Mean s.d. N	146.8 21.1 636	156.6 20.4 612	10.9 22.8 540	***

* $p \leq .05$

** $p \leq .01$

*** $p \leq .001$

* Significant at .05 level

** Significant at .01 level

*** Significant at .001 level – in ascending order

"I used to dream of finishing school despite us being poor. However at a very young age, I fell in love with someone who eventually became my husband. To support our family, I dropped out of school to help him sell pancakes at the Banucagon Primary School. One day, one teacher approached me to encourage me to enroll in an OSCY program.

I was hesitant at first and was afraid that my husband wouldn't allow me to attend. But because I was really interested to pursue studying, I spoke to him and even encouraged him to participate in the program with me.. and we did! And because we were excited to attend school together, we joined all the activities, and even took the A&E exam in the same room together.

I am so thankful that the ALS program did not just help us learn more and appreciate the value of education, it also strengthened our relationship." (NDMC)

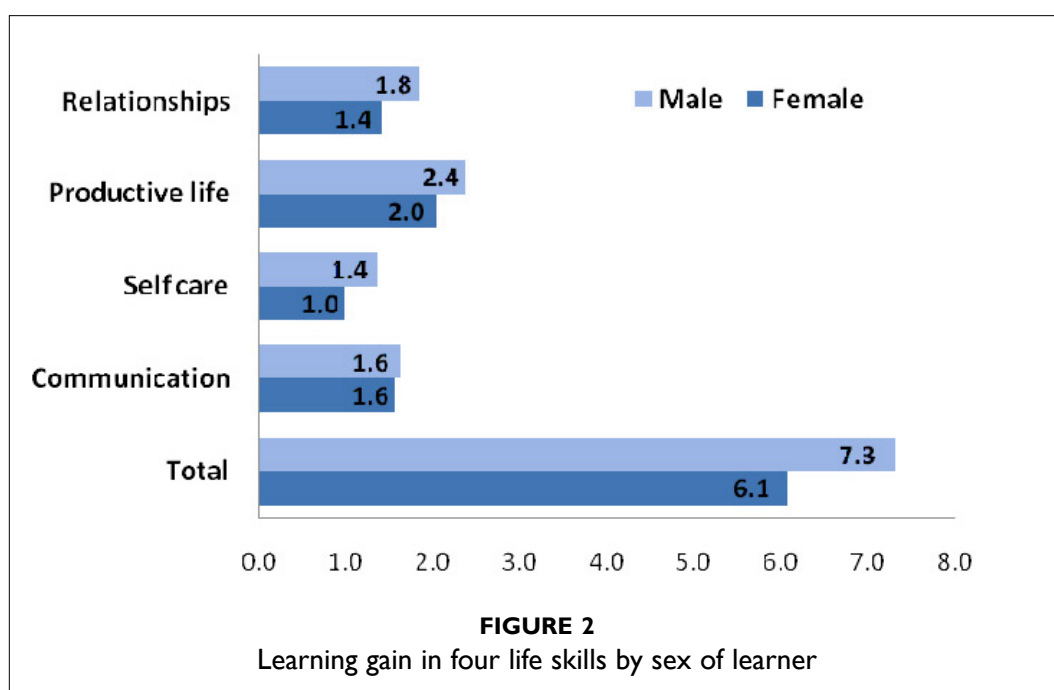
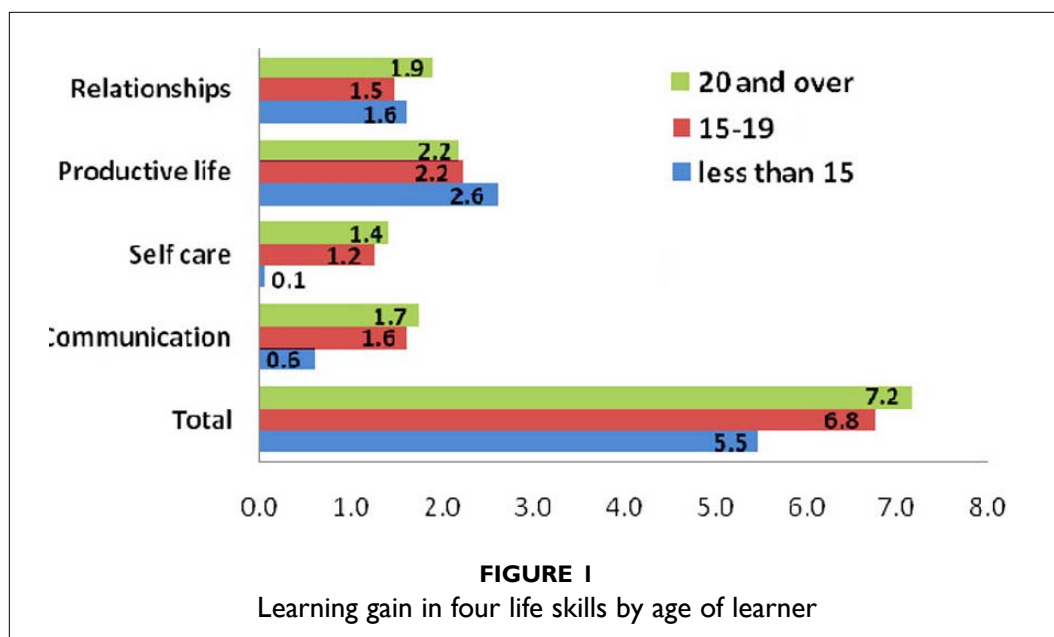
Annie Rose Laput, 20 years old
ALS Learner
Banucagon, Pigcawayan, Cotabato

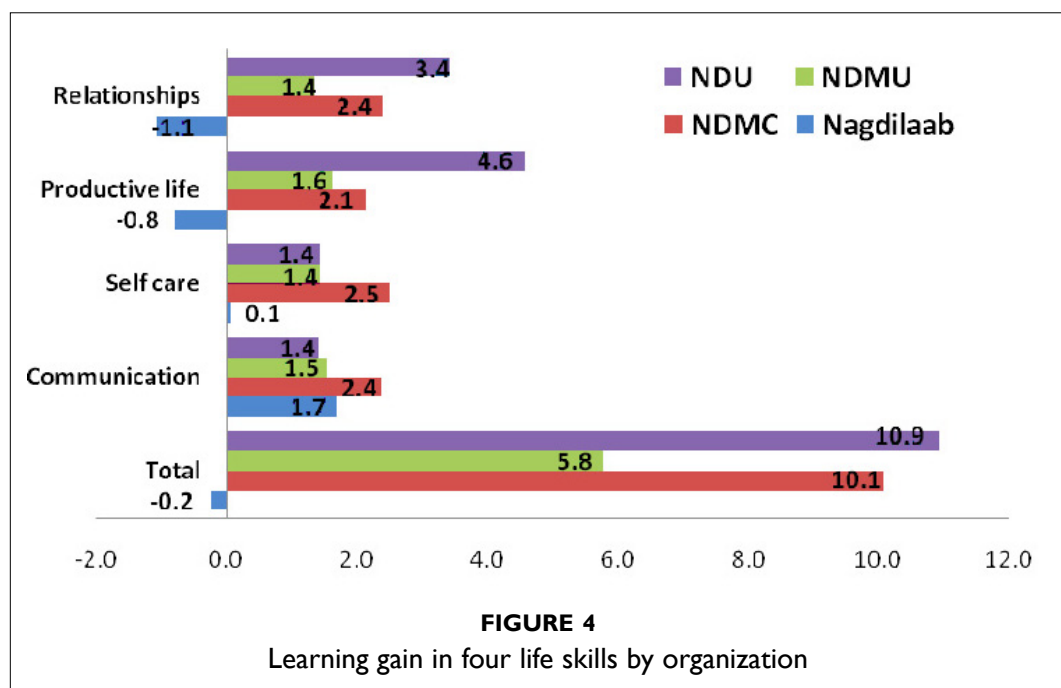
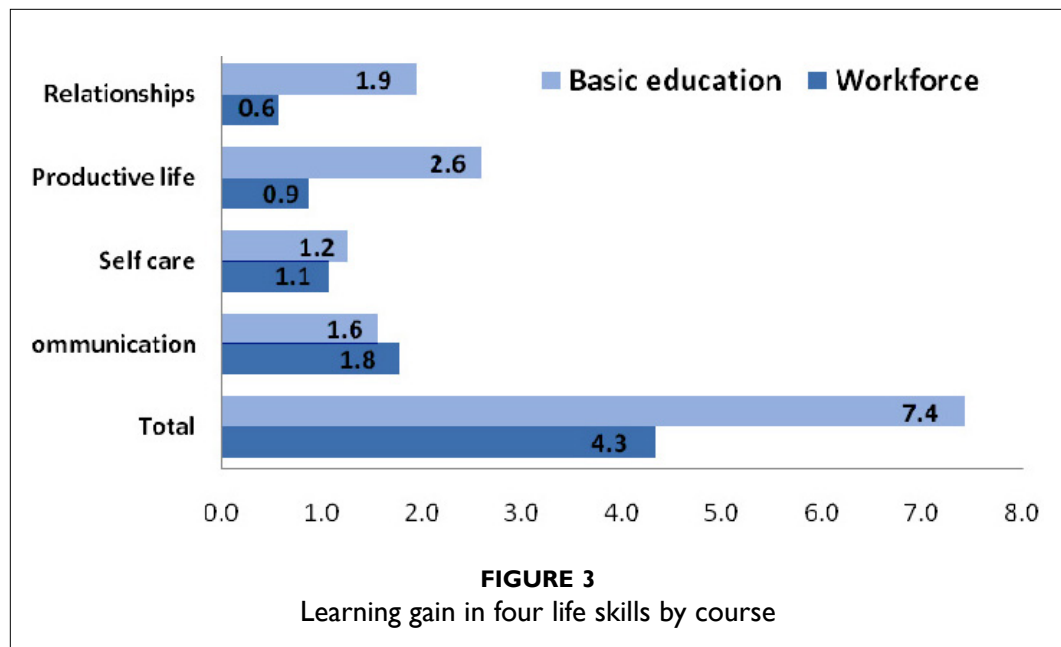


Analysis of the subscales

The total score is a composite of scores in four subscales which test for learning in four different life skills: in **basic interaction and communication, upkeep of the self, living a productive life** and **relationships with others**. In the following analysis, results are presented on learning gains in each of these life skills broken down by age, sex, course and the organization that provided the training.

Results are shown in Figures 1 to 4.





Part 1: Basic interaction and communication skills

The average overall gain in score for basic communication skills is 1.6 points. The average pre-test score is 39 while the average post-test score is 41, out of a possible maximum score of 60.

By age, the youngest age group gained the least in this component (0.6 points) while the 15-19 year olds and the 20 years and older gained about the same average points (1.6 points). Males and females gained the same number of points. Those who received work force education gained marginally more (1.8 points) than those who received basic education training. The NDMC trainees registered the highest learning gain in this component (2.4 points), followed by Nagdilaab trainees (1.7 points) with NDMU and NDU registering about the same learning gain (1.5 points).

Part 2: Upkeep of the self

For upkeep of the self, the overall mean gain in score on upkeep of the self is 1.2 points. At pre-test the overall mean is 41 and at post-test it is 42, out of a possible 60 points.

The youngest age group did not appear to have gained in this subscale unlike the 15-19 year old with an average learning gain of 1.2 and the 20 years and over who gained an average of 1.4 points. Males gained slightly more (1.4 points) than did females (1.0 points). There is a minimal difference in learning gain between workforce and basic education trainees. By organization, Nagdilaab trainees had almost no learning gain (average of 0.1 points). Again, this finding may be attributed to the fact that both Lantawan and Maluso served by Nagdilaab are conflict affected areas where learners are not able to attend training sessions during encounters between rebel groups and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. They are afraid that they may be caught in crossfires during these encounters. Thus, learners are not able to attend many sessions, including SFL sessions. NDMC trainees gained the most (2.5 points) while NDMU and NDU had the same learning gain of 1.4 points.





“... I was out of school for almost nine years because we are poor. Since then I was hooked to alcohol and was influenced by bad company. We robbed places, and did bad things. However, all these bad things stopped when I attended ALS activities. It made me realize that there is still hope for me, ‘Habang may buhay, may pag-asa’ (While there is life, there is hope). In ALS, we were given SFL and RH sessions. In SFL, I was thought how to change for the better, and to respect the elders. In RH, we were told how to take avoid getting HIV/ AIDS and other types of diseases... Also, in ALS, I learned to read and write, and now that I am studying Building Wiring, I can now help supplement our family’s income by fixing radios, installing electricity and solar wirings, and other skills. ... I love the program because it helps every one who joins it... if not for this program, I would not be a changed person... It bailed me out of living the life of an illiterate thief.”

Jonny O. Burahan, 21 years old
ALS learner, MIT, Tawi-tawi



Part 3: Living a productive life

For the life skill living a productive life there are only 9 items compared to the 12 items in the other three subscales hence the maximum possible score is 45. For all learners, the mean pre-test score is 30 while the mean post-test score is 32; the mean gain in this life skill is 2.3 points.

The youngest age group had the most learning gain in this component of the scale. Males had a slightly higher gain than females while basic education trainees had a substantially higher learning gain (an average of 2.6 points) than their workforce counterparts (average of 0.9 points). NDU trainees registered the highest gain in this component (average of 4.6 points) while Nagdilaab trainees, on the average showed a slight decrease in their score of -0.8 points).

Part 4: Relationships with others

For the subscale on the life skill relationships with others, the mean pre-test score is 39 while the mean post-test score is 42, the average gain in score is 2.7 points.

The oldest age group had the highest learning gain in this component, followed by the less than 15 year olds. Males had a slightly higher gain than females while those who received basic education training had a substantially higher gain than the workforce group. The Nagdilaab trainees had a negative average learning gain of -1.1 points. NDU trainees had the highest learning gain at an average of 3.4 points.

Regression analysis

Combining the effects of the four factors of age, sex, course and organization (see Table 7) results show that being in the youngest age group has a negative effect on learning gain compared to being age 20 and over. Sex and the kind of training received have no significant effect on learning gain. Of the organizations, Nagdilaab and NDMU have significantly lower learning gains compared with NDU trainees.

TABLE 7. Results of OLS regression on learning gain of selected predictors

Reference category	Factor	B	s.e.	t	Sig.
	(Constant)	13.4	2.09	6.387	0.000
Age	age<15	-5.7	2.44	-2.347	*
(reference = age>19)	age 15-19	-1.6	1.30	-1.212	n.s.
Sex (reference= female)	Male	0.3	1.23	0.216	n.s.
Course (reference = workforce)	Basic education	-1.0	1.90	-0.516	n.s.
Organization	Nagdilaab	-12.4	1.84	-6.739	***
(reference= NDU)	NDMC	-0.7	2.35	-0.289	n.s.
	NDMU	-6.0	1.53	-3.917	***
R square	0.041	(df1=7,	df2=1381)	F=8.403	sig=.000

* $p \leq .05$

** $p \leq .01$

*** $p \leq .001$

* Significant at .05 level

** Significant at .01 level

*** Significant at .001 level – in ascending order

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the results of the analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores using the Youth Life Skills Outcomes Scale or SFL M&E Tool #4A shows that there is an overall improvement in life skills scores among the participants in the EQuALLS2/ELSA/Consuelo Foundation BE and WFD Training Programs. The improvements were most evident in the subscale **Living a Productive Life**, Part 3 of the *SFL M&E Tool #4A*).

An analysis of the subscales shows that there are differences in the learning uptake of the various life skills. For example, those who received training in basic education gained the most points in the life skills relationships with others and living a productive life. Learners trained by Nagdilaab who registered no significant gain in total scores nevertheless showed that they learned something about basic interaction and communication skills, more than the learners taught by NDMU and NDU.

The results of the evaluation can help trainers in their future endeavors to assess where improvements can be made to maximize learning gains in each specific life skill. It is there-

fore recommended that the practice of giving the *SFL M&E Tool #4A* pre-test before the training and the post-test after the training be continued by the ELSA/Consuelo field implementing partners in order to enable them to continuously assess the skills for life developed in the learners of their BE and WFD programs. For organizations planning to include SFL components in their BE and WFD programs, it is suggested that they consider administering pre- and post-tests similar to the *SFL M&E Tool #4A* to their learners.

End Notes

- 1 “*Philippine Country Study on Life Skills Learning through NFE*”, Paper prepared by Z.T. Domingo, former Training Specialist and Head of the Business Development Office of SEAMEO INNOTECH and C. S. Guerrero, Director of the Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS) of the Department of Education (DepEd), for the *Regional Workshop on Life skills Learning Through Non-Formal Education* sponsored by the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Bureau for Education in Bali, Indonesia on 16-19 December 2003.
- 2 Department of Education and UNICEF, *Action Plan on Life Skills Education Among Filipino Children and Youth*, 2000.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 The definitions of the life skills of the Action Plan on Life Skills Education Among Filipino Children and Youth are found in Appendix A of this report.
- 6 Department of Education, *Basic Elementary Curriculum (BEC)*, 2002.
- 7 The analysis of the pre and post tests was conducted by Josefina N. Natividad, ScD, IYF M&E Consultant.
- 8 Consuelo Foundation, Inc. *Skills for Life M&E Guide: Conducting Monitoring and Evaluation for the Skills for Life Training Program*, 2005, pp. 90-101.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 During the data gathering period, there were no pre- and post-test results available from the fifth ELSA/Consuelo field implementing partner, the Mahardika Institute of Technology. Demographic notes and socio-cultural information of projects sites included in this study are found in Appendix B.





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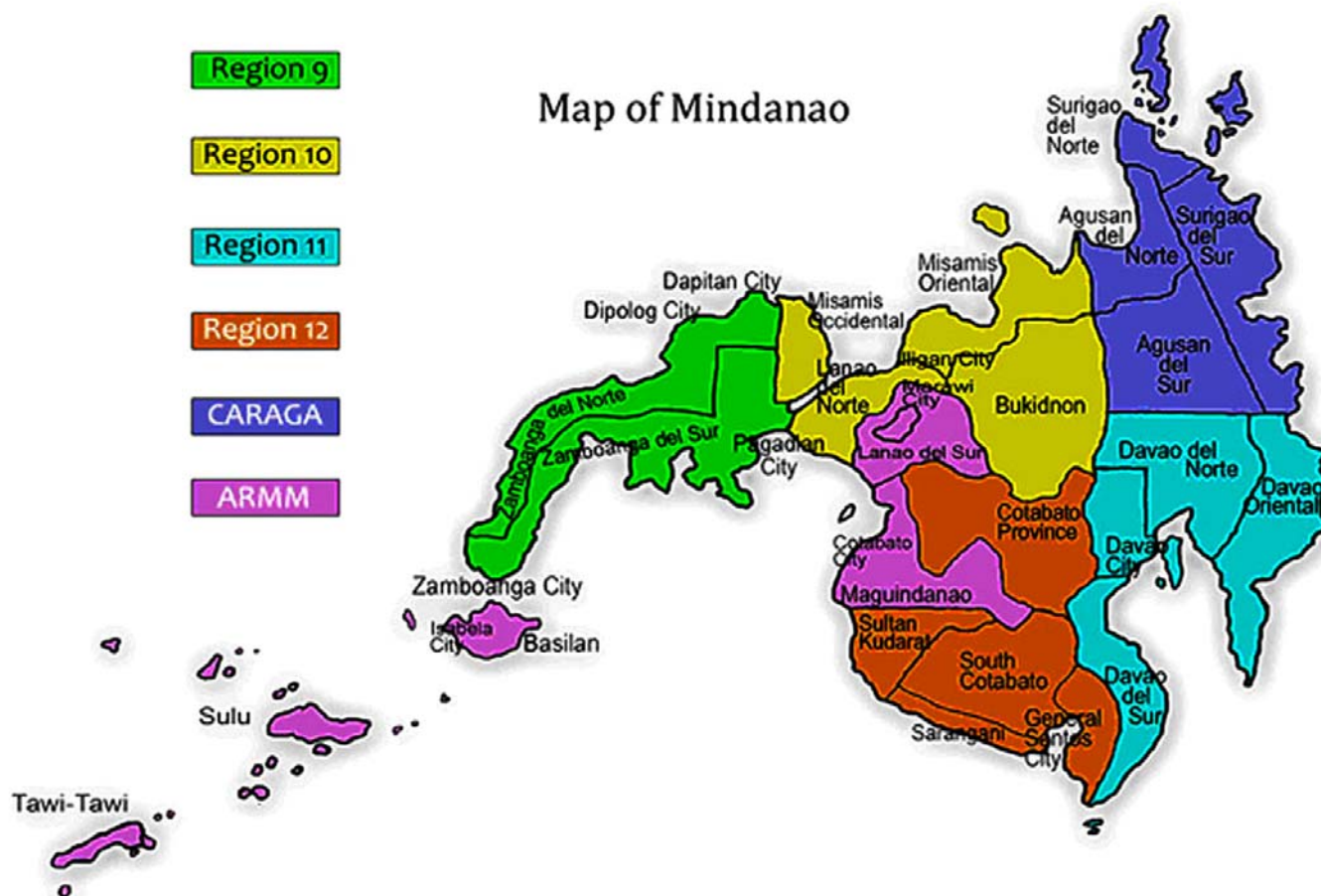
Appendix A

Definitions of Life Skills in the **Action Plan on Life Skills Education Among Filipino Children and Youth**, Department of Education and UNICEF, 2000

- **Self-awareness** includes our recognition and appreciation of our basic worth and dignity as persons, our character, our strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes, our uniqueness.
- **Empathy** is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person, even in a situation that we may not be familiar with. Empathy can help us to understand and accept others who may be different to ourselves, which can improve social interactions, for example, in situations of ethnic or cultural diversity.
- **Effective communication** means that we are able to express ourselves, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are appropriate to our cultures and situations. This means being able to express opinions and desires, but also needs and fears. And it may mean being able to ask for advice and help in a time of need.
- **Interpersonal relationship skills** help us to relate in positive ways with the people we interact with. This may mean being able to make and kind friendly relations, which can be of great importance to our mental and social well-being. And it may mean keeping good relations with family members, which are an important source of social support. It may mean able to end relationships constructively.
- **Decision-making** helps us to deal constructively with decisions about our lives. This can have consequences for health if young people actively make decisions about their actions in relation to health be assessing the different options, and what effects different decisions may have.
- **Problem-solving** enables us to deal constructively with problems in our lives. Significant problems that are left unresolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain.
- **Creative thinking** contributes to both decision-making and problem-solving by enabling us to explore the available alternatives and various consequences of our actions or non-action. It helps us look beyond our direct experience, and even if no problem is identified, or no decision is to be made, creative thinking can help us to respond adaptively and flexibility to the situation of our daily lives.
- **Coping with emotions** involves recognizing emotions in ourselves and others, being aware of how emotions influence behavior and being able to respond emotions appropriately. Intense emotions, like anger or sorrow can have negative effects on our health if we do not respond appropriately.
- **Coping with stress** is both recognizing the sources of stress in our lives, recognizing how this affect us, and acting in ways that help to control our levels of stress. This may mean that we take action to reduce the sources of stress, for example, by making changes to our physical environment or lifestyle. Or it may mean how to relax, so that tensions created by unavoidable stress do not give rise to health problems.
- **Production skills** is an addition to core life skills for Filipino children and youth. It is basically defined as the ability to utilize and maximize internal and external resources toward generating productive endeavors responsive to young people's needs.

Appendix B

NOTES ON THE EQuALLS2 PROJECT SITES WHERE
SFL PRE- and POST-TESTS WERE IMPLEMENTED



The ELSA project sites where the SFL tool was administered by the field implementing partners are in ARMM and Region 12, as follows:

- Nagdilaab Foundation, Inc. for Lantawan and Maluso in Basilan
- Notre Dame University (NDU) for Cotabato City;
- Notre Dame of Midsayap College (NDMC) for Pigcawayan, Cotabato;
- Notre Dame of Marbel University (NDMU) for Malapatan, Sarangani; Tantaran and Sto. Nino, South Cotabato, and; Esperanza and Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat

The following data provided by the ELSA field implementing partners were derived from: Municipal Development Plans, Municipal Education Agenda (MEAs), census and statistics write-ups of the municipalities and other sources.

1. Lantawan, Basilan. The word *Lantawan* originated from a Tausog word, “Lantao”, which means to oversee or to overlook from a vantage point, a name once given to a community, for the simple reason that Barangay Lantawan proper, is situated right on top of the gently rolling hill, overlooking a clear and panoramic view of the Sulu Sea and its surrounding islands and islets. Average travel time from the mainland to the islands, will take about 3-4 hours by a 16 HP pumpboat or “basnig”. It has a predominantly Tausog Speaking people, followed by the Yakans, Sama Bangingi, Chavacanos and Visayans. It has a total population of 77,487 as of 2000, which is spread in 35 barangays. Out of the total population, 10,700 are persons ages 10-24. It has the most number of islands compared to other municipalities numbering about Twenty-Five (25).

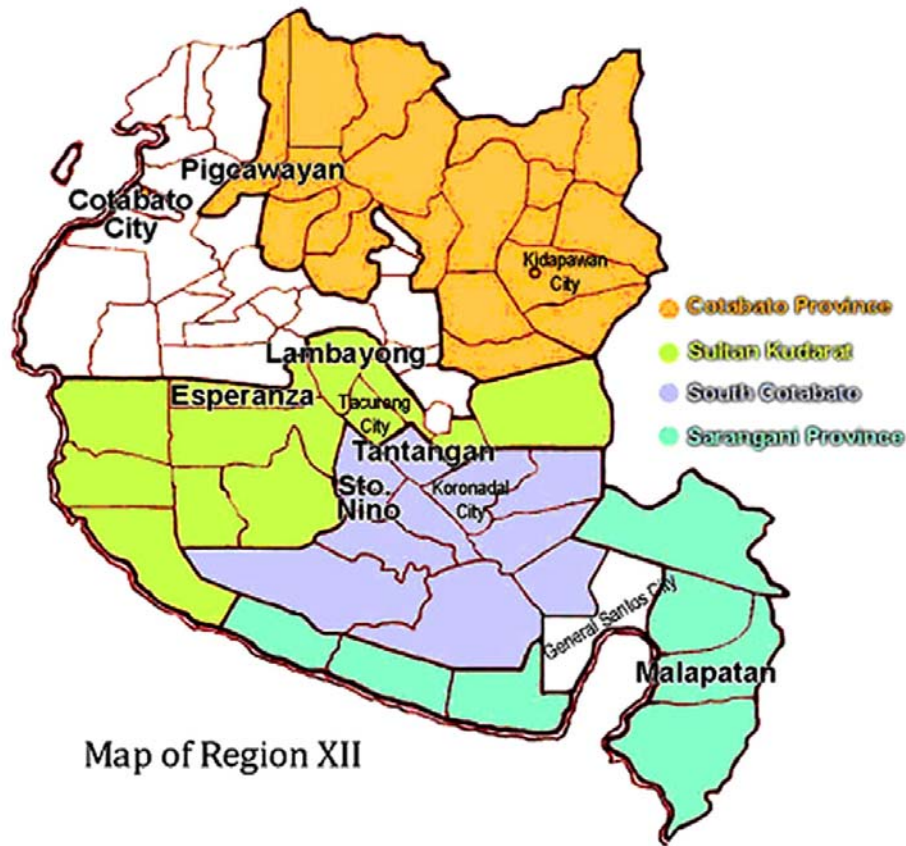
For Primary Education, It has two school districts, the mainland and the Pilas District. The Mainland District is composed of 27 schools, 17 of which are Elementary and 10 are Primary schools with 107 classrooms and 114 teaching staff including School Administrators. Meanwhile, Pilas District, comprise the island barangays, has a total of 12 schools, with 31 units of school buildings, with 58 classrooms. Eight (8) are Elementary Schools and 4 are Primary Schools with a total of 59 teaching staff, including School Administrators.

For Secondary Education, there are Five (5) National High School, located in the Barangays of Matarling, Tairan, Atong-Atong, Lubukan and Sangbay Small with 8 units of school buildings. It has a total teaching staff of 38 including a principal and Teachers-In-Charge. Majority of these school buildings are already on the verge of dilapidation, but what is more unfortunate was when 66 items of teachers were pirated due to the transfer of teachers to “safer” school districts at the height of the Government pursuit of the bandit group “Abu Sayyaf” in the 90’s and early 2000. Lately, only 6 items has been replenished by DepEd (data source: Executive Legislative Agenda, Lantawan).

2. Maluso, Basilan. *Maluso* is a word believed to have been derived from the Spanish word “MAL USO” which means bad traits or bad habits. The municipality is located on the southwestern tip of the province. It has a total land area of 16,846 hectares which is spread in the municipality’s 20 barangays. According to the 2000 census of the National Statistics Office, it has a total population of 32,843 with 4% annual growth rate. The average household is six and seven out of twenty barangays are classified as urban areas. The majority of the people in the area are Tausogs which comprises 65% of the population followed by the Yakans, Cebuanos, and Samas.

Maluso registers a 67% literacy rate. Unstable peace and order situation is considered a big factor that has considerably affected the education system

of the area, thus contributed to the low literacy among the population. Poverty, war, displacements and government's failure to address educational concerns of the province contributed much on the already alarming increase of the non and neo-literates in the area. A great number of the school children and youth have dropped from both high school and elementary level. These young people lack opportunity for employment due to lack of skills and they are potential targets for hazardous and detrimental work.



Map of Region XII

3. Cotabato City is situated in the northwest portion of Maguindanao. It is approximately 689.9 nautical miles southeast of Manila and is more or less 220 kilometers away from Davao City. The City is bounded on the North by the municipality of Sultan Kudarat with Rio Grande de Mindanao as boundary; on the East by the Municipality of Kabuntalan; on the south by the Municipality of Dinaig, Maguindanao; and the Illana Bay on the west.

The City of Cotabato with its 37 barangays spans an area with marked landscapes of flat, level to nearly level, very gently sloping to gently undulations to moderately slopping or rolling. It has a total land area of 17,599 hectares and a total population of 163,849 as of 2000 census. There are 3 mother tongues in the City; 44.6% speaks Maguindanao; 18.4% Tagalog and 17.3% Cebuano.

The City has the following major group industry such as wholesale and retail trade; commercial and personal and social services, manufacturing and processing and others. As of Dec. 11, 2001, the City has enlisted a total of 3,965 business entity. Along with the manufacturing and processing industry, the furniture sector is one those being promoted by local government through the Cotabato City Business Center (CCBC). An association of furniture makers in the City has been organized by the CCBC and is one of the partners of Notre Dame University-Small Business Institute (NDU-SBI) on the micro-financing program. This sector has a lot of potentials but has yet to be developed to become more competitive.

According to DepEd Historical Enrolment Source, Cotabato City in SY 2004-2005 posted completion rate in Elementary as only 56.91% and 64.46% in Secondary. This could be party because of the issues and concerns in the City's education sector which reveals the following: lack of education coordinators and para-teachers; lack of classroom and multi-purpose halls and basic facilities for education purposes; lack of teachers; increasing number of school drop-outs; problem on drug addiction, juvenile delinquency and prostitution; growing incidence of gangsterism; lack of sports facilities; and absence of sports program.

4. **Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat.** The Municipality of Esperanza was created under Presidential Decree No. 339, dated November 22, 1973, with 27 barangays, out of the thirty four (34) existing barangays of Ampatuan, Cotabato. However, due to the petition submitted by prominent leaders to former President Ferdinand E. Marcos, the aforementioned decree was amended by P.D. No. 596 dated December 3, 1974, which reduced its area to the present 19 barangays.

Esperanza is a Spanish term which means "HOPE". It was said that the first baby born in the new settled purok was a girl. As a new born, this infant was baptized and christened ESPERANZA. Deeply religious, the people adapted the name which they believe would bring peace, unity, and progress to the inhabitants of the place.

Sometime in 1952, a group of Christian settlers established a settlement in Villamor, Dulawan, Cotabato now known as barangay Villamor, Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat, amidst a vast wilderness. At that time, Esperanza was only a purok or sitio of barangay Villamor.

The municipality of Esperanza is located at the northernmost portion of the province of Sultan Kudarat. It is bounded on the north by the municipality of Ampatuan, Maguindanao, on the East by the municipality of Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat, on the south by the municipality of Isulan, Sultan Kudarat and on the west by the municipality of Lebak, Sultan Kudarat. It is a 3rd class municipality in the province of Sultan Kudarat, Philippines. According to the 2000 census, it has a population of 47,578 people in 9,598 households.

5. Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat. Lambayong is located at the northmost part of Sultan Kudarat. It is bounded on the North by Sultan Sa Barongis, Maguindanao Province; on the South by Tacurong City; on the East by Municipality of SK Pendatun of Maguindanao Province and Pres. Quirino, Sultan Kudarat on the West by Isulan and Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat and Municipality of Ampatuan, Maguindanao Province. Travel time from Lambayong to Isulan, the capital town of Sultan Kudarat is approximately 25 to 30 minutes. Its total land area is 32,482.62 hectares with 26 barangays.

Lambayong (formerly called Mariano Marcos) was created as a municipality and now part of Sultan Kudarat province by virtue of Executive Order No. 543 signed by the late President Elpidio C. Quirino on October 29, 1952, the name “Lambayong” was changed to Sultan Sa Barongis then under the administration of the undivided Cotabato province by Republic Act No. 2589 in honor of the late Sultan Sa Barongis believed to be the forefather of the Pendatun family, the ruling elite during this period. On April 29, 1974 upon signing of Presidential Decree No. 339 by the then President Ferdinand E. Marcos, Sultan Sa Barongis was changed to Mariano Marcos making it part of Sultan Kudarat province. Lambayong is now the adopted name of the municipality after it was changed from Mariano Marcos for the second time.

Before its creation as a separate and distinct municipality of the province of Sultan Kudarat, Lambayong was a sitio called TORRE because of the presence of a watch tower during the Spanish period. This served as a guard post to protect the Spaniards from sporadic attacks of the native rebels. When it was created as a town it was popularly known as Lambayong, a violet colored ornamental plant, which was abundantly widespread in the area. In 1952, there was marked influx of Christian settlers from all parts of the country, the Ilocanos notably the biggest group, which came from Luzon. It was also during this period that the Alunan Road was constructed linking Cotabato City to General Santos City, which provided access of the municipality to nearby towns .

In the provincial hierarchy, Lambayong is a satellite town of the province. Based on 2000 NSO survey, Lambayong displays a total population of 51,192 . Among the various dialect spoken in the municipality, Ilocano is the dominant with 21,605 persons. Maguindanao follows this with 19,022 persons Hiligaynon-Ilonggo speaking persons totaled to 7,719. Since the occupational mode of its migrants was mainly agricultural, the pattern of development became agriculture thus major industry is rice.

6. Malapatan, Sarangani. Malapatan is a coastal town of Sarangani which has expansive coconut farms and scenic shorelines. It is about fourteen kilometers from Alabel, the capital town of Sarangani. The town is bounded by the Municipality of Alabel by the North; by the Municipality of Glan by the South, by the Province of Davao Del Sur by the East; and by the Sarangani Bay by the West. It has 12 barangays and close to 500,000 population according to the 2007 national census.

It is believed that the word “Malapatan” is a combination of two B’laan words— “mala’ which means pepper and “fatan” which means place. The town is populated by a mix of Christians, Muslims and other indigenous tribes, notably the B’laans. Historians note that in the 15th century, Sarip Kabungsuan of Arabia and his “ulamas”, arrived in Kuta Wato and propagated Islam and Datuism in the place. The indigenous tribes who did not embrace Islam and Datuism migrated further inland to what is now known as the town of Malapatan.

When the Americans came in the early 20th Century, they encouraged migration to Mindanao by creating Christian settlements in the island, including Malapatan. Settlers, mostly from the Visayas occupied and cultivated the fertile and verdant lands of Malapatan and its environs. The resulting economic progress attracted more migration, and the indigenous peoples who decided not to go inland anymore, started to live amicably with the Christians.

Thus, Malapatan is now populated by a mix of Christians, Muslims and tribal indigenous peoples. The present composition of the population is: Christians, primarily from Visayas —about 40%; B’laans— more than 37%; Muslims – 12%; other tribal groups – about 11% of the population. Cebuano is the predominant language in Malapatan.

Malapatan is mainly an agricultural town, with copra production as the highest income earner, and the town is fast developing its oil milling activities because of the abundance of coconut in majority of its villages. Other agricultural products are maize, sugarcane, bananas, pineapples, mangoes, eggs, beef, etc. The coastal villages of Malapatan are lined with fishing grounds that serve as anchorage for big fishing boats. This town is also known for shipbuilding industry. Further, it has more than 12 kilometers of beaches and resorts which are located in the following barangays: Lun Padidu, Lun Masla, Tuyan, and Poblacion. Several prawn farms are operational in Lun Padidu, Lun Masla and Tuyan. There are also home-based fish drying and fish processing enterprises.

- 7. Pigkawayan, Cotabato Province.** Before its creation as a separate and independent municipality, Pigkawayan was a component barangay of Midsayap, North Cotabato. In September 30, 1953, through the issuance of E.O. No. 622, Pigkawayan was created as the 17th municipality of the province of North Cotabato. Geographically, it is 26 kilometers from Cotabato City, and 32 kilometers from the Awang Airport. Majority of its people are Ilonggo, Cebuano and Ilocano, and the major dialect spoken is Hiligaynon.

Today, Pigkawayan is classified as a second class municipality based on its income. Its main industry is still agriculture which produces mainly corn and rice. Processed milled rice by Rice Mills are usually brought/sold to Cotabato City, Davao City and in some parts of South Cotabato. Pigkawayan is primarily an agri-base municipality, so majority of the people are farmers. Other economic activities include agri-business, commerce and trade, and cottage industries like bamboo and rattan crafts. At present we have farmers who have availed of

the “Plant Now Pay Later” program of the provincial government. Seedlings given out at a very minimal cost include mangoes, rambutan and other high value commercial crops.

On the urban-rural population distribution, 14.841% are found in the urban areas which is composed of Barangays 1,2, and 3 of the Poblacion and Poblacion 3 has the highest population. The dominant dialect is Hiligaynon which is spoken by 33,453 or 65.60% of the total population. This is followed by the Maguindanaon of 11,122 or 21.81%. Other dialects are the Cebuano, Manobo, Waray, Chavacano, Tagalog, Ilocano, Agutaynon and Anobaloi. All tribes however, can speak fluently Hiligaynon.

In terms of religious affiliation, the municipality has 23 different religious groups, however, majority or 31,760 (62.28% are Roman Catholics, 11,994 (23.52%) practice the Islam religion and the rest are either INK and the different Protestant Groups.

The municipality has a literacy rate of 89.72%. As per record of the NSO 43.07% are in the elementary level of education, degree holders is 1,761 of the total population.

The municipality has 40 barangays. Out of this, ELSA/ Consuelo Foundation through the Notre Dame of Midsayap College (NDMC), implements EQUALLS2-funded ALS programs in 29 barangays. However, for this study, respondents for the ALS and WDTC were taken from seven only (7) barangays, namely Barangay Tubon, Barangay New Panay, Barangay Poblacion 1, Barangay Simsiman, Barangay Capayuran, Barangay Malu-ao, and Barangay Bacunagon.

As with the rest of the municipality, the main occupation in these seven barangays is farming, with rice, corn and copra as main products. The most common modes of transportation are tricycle and the “skylab” or “habal-habal”, a local term for a single motorcycle. Also, these seven barangays have the basic social services and facilities like the barangay hall, a health station, a basketball court, a solar dryer, an irrigation system, and a day care center.

Pigcawayan’s economy is geared towards a sustained agricultural development coupled with matching agro-based industries. Eco-tourism is considered as one of its economic parameters since the municipality have tourism potential sites. The commercial activities in the urban area will be increased and expanded towards two blocks from the existing location. Expansion is fast especially along the National Highway. Settlement areas or built-up areas will extend east of the Poblacion towards barangay Tubon, Capayuran, Balogo, and Baguer. Minimal expansion is proposed on the Southern portion as this area is predominantly agricultural.

Areas for socialized housing, dumpsite and agro-industrial sites were already identified and plotted in the land use plan. Programs for environmental protection are incorporated in every sector. The basic infrastructure support will be distributed to every barangay. Power and communication facilities will be increased to as much as 85 percent by year 2005.

Finally, the improvement of delivery of public service will depend on the effort of the line agencies and the sincere dedication of the government officials, employees, and the people of the community who are the end beneficiaries of all these development programs and projects.

8. Sto. Niño, South Cotabato. Sto. Niño is a land-locked municipality located in the south-west part of the Province of South Cotabato. It is bounded on the North by the Municipality of Norala, on the North-East by the Municipality of Banga, South-West by the Municipality Surallah and in the North-West and South-Western portion by the Municipality of Bagumbayan and Isulan, province of Sultan Kudarat. Considered as the rice bin of South Cotabato, Sto. Niño belongs to the Allah Valley covering vast areas fertile land. It is about 32 kilometers from the City of Koronadal, the capital of South Cotabato, 92 kilometers from the fast-growing General Santos City and 242 kilometers from Davao City, which is recognized as a leading growth area of Mindanao.

“Sto. Niño” means “holy child” in Spanish. The town was created in 1980, and the 2007 national census showed that it had close to 38,000 population. Its total land area is 10,973 hectares, and presently has 10 barangays.

Sto. Niño is a major actor in the socio-economic progress of South Cotabato. Almost 1005 of the land is arable and its major produce is rice and other high value crops. Moreover, there many rivers that serve as sources of water for irrigation in the various faming activities. With substantial crops harvested regularly, the municipal government presently focuses on farm-to-market construction work such as road and bridge building , drainage and setting up of other facilities designed to improve the marketing of its produce. Livelihood projects are also being implemented through extensive training of farmers and farm managers on modern farming technologies.

The municipality boasts of several tourist attractions: Sto. Niño Hillside Swimming Pool, the Barangay Panay Lake which attracts visitors interested in boating, fishing hobby and other activities such as environment-related activities. Sto Niño also holds several festivities which are participated in by visitors all over the country, most notable of which are – the Tinalak festival which features various products made of Tinalak, a native woven material and the Hinublag Festival which is a monthly celebration of the founding of the municipality. The highlight of the festival is street dancing to honor the town’s patron saint, Sr. Sto. Niño.

9. Tantaran, South Cotabato. Tantaran is a 4th class municipality in the province of South Cotabato, Philippines. According to the 2000 census, it has a population of 32,636 people in 6,583 households.

Long before the Spanish occupation in the Philippines, the area where the municipality of Tantaran is to be carved out is already populated. The area is located at the mouth of a big river called LUAYAN and empties its water into a very big lake. The inhabitants during those times were the Muslims, which are

traced to the leadership of Sultan Kudarat who occupied the lakeshores and the B'laans who thrived into the mountainous hinterlands. As such, the leaders of the different “balangays” along the lake shores were called by their federal leader based in Luayan through the use of Kulitangtangan, a bell so enormous its ringing could be heard in quite a distance. This device latter served as the basis and origin of the name of the place as Tangtangan by the first Ilocano settlers from Luzon, which, in later years refined into Tantangan. As the years went by, the big lake shrunk and what remained is now the Buluan Lake. Subsequently, Luayan was depopulated as the inhabitants followed the shrinking of the lake and the B'laans remained in the mountainous hinterlands.

With favorable conditions and the able leadership of the past and present leaders, the Municipality of Tantangan is fast growing with its role as the cereal (grain) producer of the province of South Cotabato.





MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH **SKILLS FOR LIFE**

