

PROJECT BALSA: STRENGTHENING ALS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

by:

Albert J. Mallari

Teacher II, DALSC – Samal District

Before the big ships ruled the vast ocean, rafts, or balsa once braved the waves and connected the lands for humanity; a small boat made by tightly bundled reeds strongly enough to reach the unreachable, to ride the impossible, and to coast the unmarkable. A balsa signifies that no one can sink down one's dream if everyone shares a common goal fused with each other's strength. In this wide ocean of life where a human cannot fearlessly cross the intimidating waves ahead, a raft shall be made by a helping hand.

The balsa or rafts have been the inspiration to initiate a partnership project bridging the Alternative Learning System (ALS) to the stakeholders for the students in need. In order to achieve ALS 2.0's mission, vision, goals and objectives, Project BALSA, or Building Accessible Limitless Services for Alternative Learning System became its innovation to deliver effective, efficient, and empowering services for better cooperation with the stakeholders.

Project BALSA targets several difficulties specifically faced by unskilled and untrained ALS learners who had seldom access on skills training given provided by different government agencies like TESDA, PESO and DTI. This project also aims to address the problem in data collection by engaging schools and barangays within the municipality on data gathering for policy making and planning. Furthermore, some observed discrepancies were lack of support and partnerships ending with less projects.

To address such timely issues that ALS underwent, Project BALSA comes up with a solution thru a three-fold program, The KALSLINGAP, 4Ks (Kalinangan sa Kakayahan

ang Kailangan ng Ka-ALS), and E-Access. The programs aim to create better partnership and awareness, uplift its system, and encourage different stakeholders to assist the learners and the department.

For KALSLINGAP, it aims for strong engagement to the program and projects of the Alternative Learning System which facilitators can be able to apply for assistance from different agencies and individuals such as supplies, uniforms and other needs of the learners. Meanwhile, the 4Ks program, or Kalinangan sa Kakayahan ang Kailangan ng mga Ka-ALS, targets unskilled and untrained ALS Learners by having an agreement with skilled experts, NGO's, and training agencies such as TESDA, DTI and PESO for trainings. On the other hand, the ALS E-ACCESS will be designed for accessible and available data for schools and barangays for effective planning and policy making.

In the end, every individual that will be involved in this project should brave the uncertainties and go hand-in-hand to achieve better services, better partnership, better results not just for the learner-clienteles but for the community it builds.

References:

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/balsa>

<https://www.techtarget.com/searchdatamanagement/definition/database-management-system>

<https://www.tesda.gov.ph/About/TESDA/47#:~:text=The%20Technical%20Education%20and%20Skills,the%20rapidly%20evolving%20global%20economy.>

<https://usaprojects.org/philippine-government-youth-upskilling-programs/>

<https://www.deped.gov.ph/k-to-12/inclusive-education/about-alternative-learning-system/>