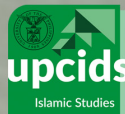




UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES  
CENTER FOR  
INTEGRATIVE AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
STUDIES



PROCEEDINGS 2023

# MUSLIM INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION WEBINAR PROCEEDINGS

November 24, 2021

{الذي خلق خلق الإنسان من علق اقرأ وربك الأكرم الذي علم بالقلم علم الإنسان ما لم يعلم}





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Lower Ground Floor, Ang Bahay ng Alumni

Magsaysay Avenue, University of the Philippines

Diliman, Quezon City 1101

Telephone: (02) 8981-8500 loc. 4266 to 4268 / (02) 8426-0955

Email: [cidspublications@up.edu.ph](mailto:cidspublications@up.edu.ph)

Website: [cids.up.edu.ph](http://cids.up.edu.ph)

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## About the Proceedings

These are the proceedings of a webinar on Muslim Institutional Development in Education, which moderates information exchange on government initiatives towards the development of Muslim education in the Philippines. Held on 24 November 2021, the webinar saw a rich discussion of certain government mandates and policies that can help further institutionalize and mainstream Muslim education in the Philippine education system.

The webinar was organized by the Islamic Studies Program of UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies. Serving as Project Leader and Editor was Assistant Professor Nefertari A. Arsad, PhD, while the documenters/writers were Ms. Camille Lucille A. Bello and Dr. Cheery D. Orozco. Ms. Arlene A. Tarroja transcribed the proceedings.

## **Webinar Overview and Presentation of Resource Speakers**

**Assistant Professor Nefertari A. Arsad, PhD**

*Program Leader, University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies–Islamic Studies Program*

*Faculty, University of the Philippines Institute of Islamic Studies*

Dr. Arsad started by welcoming all webinar attendees and introducing the resource speakers presenting on the various government initiatives that helped build and develop Muslim education in the Philippines. She provided a brief background on the government mandates and policies that enabled Muslim education to be institutionalized or mainstreamed in the Philippine education system.

Dr. Arsad explained that the first of these systemic legislations was the Letter of Instruction (LOI) 1221 in 1982 by then President Ferdinand Marcos. The intent was to give space to madrasah education both at the basic and the higher education levels and the teaching of Shari'ah Law and Arabic language in select education programs in the Philippines. Though LOI 1221 provided much institutional empowerment, it was not systemically implemented. However, it became an impetus for many Muslim private institutions, organizations, and individuals to establish programs where they could integrate and institutionalize Islamic education subjects into the national curriculum.

The background provided by Dr. Arsad is an important springboard for the presentation of Ms. Mildred B. Zamar on the framework and development of the current Muslim Education Program (MEP) of the Department of Education.



## **The Department of Education Muslim Education Program**

**Ms. Mildred B. Zamar**

*Supervising Education Program Specialist, Bureau of Curriculum Special Curricular Programs Division, Department of Education, Pasig City*

Ms. Mildred B. Zamar elaborated on her task to provide an overview of the Madrasah Education Program (MEP), particularly, the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) program, which is primarily used in public schools in the country. The presentation highlighted the MEP curriculum framework and its development initiatives through the years. First off, the Inclusive Education Policy Framework on Basic Education in the Department Order (DO) 21, Series of 2019, mandates to protect and promote the right of every Filipino citizen to quality education, which will enable each learner to realize his or her full potential and meaningfully take part in nation-building. This promotes the implementation of the K–12 program that addresses the various physical, intellectual, psychological, and cultural needs of learners in diverse contexts. An inclusive curriculum is learner-centered, developmentally appropriate, culture-sensitive, relevant, gender-responsive, and contextualized.

Ms. Zamar defined DepEd’s Muslim Education Program as a comprehensive program for Muslim learners both in public schools and private schools or madaris. The ALIVE program is one of the services in the MEP, which aims to provide Muslim Filipino learners with appropriate and relevant educational opportunities within the context of their cultures, customs, traditions, and interests. It also provides Muslim Filipino learners with an education system that is responsive to the needs, the cognitive and cultural capacities, and the circumstances and diversity of learners, schools, and communities. The program has been implemented by the DepEd as a form of affirmative action that contributes to the government’s national goal to attain peace in the country. The program was implemented for learners in public schools from Grade 1 to Grade 6 while the curricula for Kindergarten and Grades 7 to 10 are still being developed. The Arabic language (AL)

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is taught three times a week, and classes in Islamic values education (IVE) are held twice a week with a time allocation of 40 minutes per class session. These are additional subjects to the minimum K–12 requirements prescribed for Filipino Muslim learners. The minimum required number of learners per class is 15 students. The mediums of instruction for the ALIVE subjects are Filipino, English, the learners' mother tongue (for the IVE subject), and Arabic.

Ms. Zamar presented data on Muslim Filipino elementary learners in public schools in the school year 2015–2019. Though the ALIVE curriculum was implemented in 2004, she reported that the number of enrollees decreased when the K–12 curriculum was rolled out. But it started to pick up again with 918,000 enrollees in 2015, almost 939,000 enrollees in 2016, and 930,000 enrollees in 2017. Enrollment figures went down at this time, when the Senior High School program (SHS) started and while DepEd was still recalibrating the ALIVE program. However, there was no data of enrollees for 2020 to 2021 when the pandemic hit as the regional offices were not able to keep track of enrollees. It was a challenge when many students stopped going to school. It was a challenge how and where to collect data. So, the updating of data took some time. Republic Act No. 10533 was enacted to enhance the Philippine basic education system by strengthening its curriculum and increasing the number of years for basic education, appropriating funds thereof, and for other purposes. It also acknowledged the madrasah program design using the madrasah curriculum prescribed by DepEd in coordination with the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) for Muslim Filipino learners in private and public schools. There are allotted funds for both the private madaris and public schools. With this initiative, private madaris are offered the option to be DepEd-compliant educational institutions that offer K-12 programs including Islamic education. There were 84 private madaris who were recipients of DepEd financial assistance in 2019.

Ms. Zamar went on to discuss the three frameworks of MEP—the ALIVE framework as a whole, the AL conceptual framework, and the IVE conceptual framework. First is the scope of the ALIVE curriculum whose framework is anchored on established theories and guiding principles. The ALIVE framework for the Muslim learners has an image

of a plant box with hands and a flower bud in the middle. On its left is the AL while on the right is the IVE. Under it is the philosophy of constructivism, where students make meanings on their own and from their multicultural backgrounds and perspectives. The DepEd envisions for students to develop their pure nature or *fitrah*. When learners develop their proficiency in AL, they start from basic to intermediate and advanced levels of developing their communicative competencies and critical literacy which they then apply to Islamic literacy and understanding. The pedagogy of the ALIVE program is cohesive, where AL is connected to IVE, and they work together. Language competency should result in a better and clearer understanding of the IVE—of oneself, one’s connection to the Creator or Allah, and to the rest of the Muslim *ummah* (i.e. community of believers, Muslims) all over the world. In the middle of the image is the preservation of identity, culture, and heritage; promotion of peace, progress, and unity; and the strengthening of Muslims. In the IVE spectrum, the end result is transformation on various levels, to develop one’s inner being, submit to the teachings and doctrines of Islam, become a believer, and be excellent in life. Transformation also includes the promotion of the learners’ collective rights and responsibilities as stewards of the earth and creation. Monitoring and evaluation are salient parts of the ALIVE curriculum framework, particularly, in curriculum implementation. Ms. Zamar poses a question: “What use will a good curriculum have if it cannot bring about a holistic transformation in the learners’ way of life or in one’s spiritual, intellectual, social, cultural, scientific, and physical being?”

The vision statement of the curriculum is for the learner to emulate the character traits and virtues of Prophet Muhammad, to be God-fearing, nationalistic, law-abiding with concern for his fellowmen and environment, knowledgeable in Arabic, intelligent, and industrious. The mission statement is to promote a curriculum that is culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate, and responsive to the needs of the learners. Learners shall be imbued with universal values that are found in the Holy Qur’an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad. They are envisioned to become competent in AL and use it to communicate, engage in more work opportunities and become excellent in all the areas of life and undertakings. The goals are to offer functional

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literacy and culturally relevant education among all Muslim Filipino learners through the ALIVE Program and to provide a curriculum that is aligned with the K–12 Basic Education framework of DepEd. The goals are aligned with the universal values as DepEd serves all types of learners. Muslim Filipinos have the inclination to learn and the potential to develop themselves. They have the capacity to learn basic preparedness and progression. They need experiences through which knowledge of Islamic faith and practices may be acquired. They need skills required for reading, memorizing, comprehending, and applying the Qur’anic ideology. They need awareness of the legacy of Islam as expressed through its history and culture, as values and belief systems are promoted through these. The development of the Islamic identity in accordance with Islamic principles and values is important as it will result in having creative, meaningful, innovative, value-based instruction that provides a safe and orderly environment for Muslim Filipino learners.

In consideration of the 21st-century changes and needs of the national and global community of Muslim Filipinos in madrasah education, including their historical grievances, marginalization, and sociocultural and educational injustices, the recognition of the madrasah system is integral to the advocacy of the Moro liberation movement. In the final Peace Agreement during the Ramos administration, there was a concession for the appointment of qualified Muslims across the departments to strategic positions, such as the Undersecretary for Muslim Affairs. In the Arroyo Administration, the “Mindanao Natin” agenda was developed and the madrasah recognition was part of the peace-building components. Then in 2004, Dr. Manaros B. Boransing was appointed to develop the MEP in DepEd.

Secondly, the conceptual framework of AL includes the domains of the language, such as interactive learning, challenging learning, content knowledge building, emphasis on different text types, scaffolding, assessment, etc. These are aligned to English, Filipino, and the mother tongues as the learners learn these languages at different levels. AL is taught using the domains with the considerations of phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, phonics, and word recognition, listening comprehension, oral language, vocabulary and concept development,

reading comprehension, grammar awareness, fluency, literature, and composing. The critical questions are: Are these domains connected or separate? What are the horizontal and vertical articulations of these different domains? There is the consideration of the interconnection of alphabet knowledge and listening comprehension, for example, to how the spiral progression deepens. Developing an efficient curriculum framework for AL is tedious, challenging, and exciting. Then, there are the five macro skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing. These are funneled across the key stages of learning. For example, alphabet knowledge, phonics and word recognition, and awareness of phonological skills are taught from Kindergarten to Grade 3, memorization in Grades 4 to 6, and grammar or viewing composition in the succeeding grades. Some of the domains change as the levels of learning grow, but most of the domains in Grades 4-10 are similar.

The assessment of the learners' language competencies pertains to their understanding and application of the language, particularly to IVE. Thus, the assessment procedure is holistic, covering not only the vocabulary, oral language, and writing but the interconnections of the domains. The assessment is also developmentally appropriate depending on the level of learning. There are key stage standards in K-10 that must be followed. For example, K-3 has a maximum of 6-syllable words which progresses in K-4 to K-6 and in K-7 to K-10. It would include an understanding of print, non-print, and digital materials as tools to solve real-world problems. An example of an AL curriculum for kindergarten, which was uploaded to the DepEd learning resources portal, is a play-based curriculum with pertinent learning competencies. The content should be translated into behavior or performance standards. For Grade 1, the horizontal articulations in a week are alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, listening comprehension, and oral language. The materials must contain these language competencies in spiral progression. Then the competencies are coded.

Thirdly, the conceptual framework of IVE includes the stages of the learners' development where the learning outcomes are visible. The critical questions are: Are there transformations? Are they adapting IVE appropriately to their stages of learning and growth? Are they adapting to the four core DepEd values, such as, "maka-Diyos, makatao,

makakalikasan at makabansa?” The learning outcome indicators provide a translation of the curriculum in the lives of the learners when the stages of transformation become visible for the learners through these four competencies – understanding, reflecting, making decisions, and acting. This is also called a process of the head, heart, and hand. These indicators are also found in different key stage standards of learning and expected spiral progression from Kindergarten to Grade 3, from Grade 4 to 6, and from Grade 7 to 10. Then, there is a standard of concepts in teaching a theme in progression from Kindergarten to Grade 10. These curriculum components are yet to be implemented, though the IVE is very different from the AL curriculum. The IVE curriculum looks at the learning competencies and how they are broken down into specific steps in order to achieve the performance standards, therefore, achieving the contents standards.

In the final part of her presentation, Ms. Zamar discussed DepEd’s response to ensuring that the importance of education as a foundation of all development remains unchanged amidst the pandemic. As she quoted from a UNESCO report, the nationwide closures of various sectors and services are “impacting almost 70% of the world’s student population with millions of additional learners affected by localized closure implemented.” Thus, the DepEd’s policy response to navigate the changes to sustain the delivery of a quality, accessible, and relevant basic education–learning continuity plan (BELCP) is to enable learners of basic education to continue learning and for teachers to be able to deliver instruction in a safe work and learning environment and meet the threats of COVID-19. In collaboration with the Assessment Curriculum and Technological Research Center (ACTRC), DepEd inquired how the most essential learning competencies (MELCs) are determined and reported that endurance was considered the primary determining factor. Thus, the endurance criteria or those that remain with or become useful to the learners long after a test or unit of study was completed were determined in the learning competencies of the ALIVE program. Such learning competencies include research skills, reading comprehension, writing, map reading, etc., or those that were defined by the students’ needs.

Determining essential learning competencies entails aligning them with national and local standard frameworks, such as the framework of the DepEd curriculum. It should also connect the content to higher concepts across content areas. Then, it should contribute to lifelong learning and become a prerequisite skill for the next grade level. To decongest these endurance criteria, DepEd had to merge the learning competencies based on the objective or learning intention or rephrased the learning competencies to be more concise, responsive, and relevant to the new normal learning set-up. An example is how physical education can be rephrased to accommodate the online learning approach or dropped if it's already specific and the articulation is similar to another learning objective. And field implementors are encouraged to contextualize the MELCs to accommodate the varying contexts of the learners, teachers, learning environments, and support structures. An example of formulating MELCs for AL is to (1) identify what the essential learning competencies (ESS) are by determining the desirable learning competencies, and (2) identify the MELCs out of the ESS and decide on whether to retain, drop, merge, rephrase, or cluster the other competencies; then finalize the MELCs.

In AL there are four domains and 50 competencies of listening comprehension. It is the same for the oral language with designated domains and coded competencies. Identifying the ESS with significant justification in all of these coded competencies can be a long and tedious process. But once they are determined, the MELCs will also be determined. The justification in each step is very important to satisfy all considerations until a decision point is reached. At the end of the process, more than half of the LCs were dropped and the rest were retained. From those retained, some were even merged to determine the new AL MELCs for a seven-week teaching plan in the new normal. The same process was followed in IVE when determining the ESS for another seven-week quarterly module. In conclusion, the MELCs were chosen for their endurance and being anchored on the nonnegotiable contents and performance standards. Likewise, in the development of the MELCs, great consideration was also given to how the process of teaching and learning happens. When education is in crisis within a process or within a context where there are limited time and resources,

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learning is mostly done at home, and the parents and the guardians serve as the learners' primary teachers. Those factors have to be considered as well.

In closing, Ms. Zamar pointed out that DepEd remains committed to serving: "These times may be difficult times for many of us but this can also be a great time for us to cultivate and promote solidarity and unity in diversity amidst the crisis. Through the efforts of the Department of Education, we spend time in conversation with the implementors of the program. We hope to continually address the needs and concerns of our Muslim Filipino learners who are imbued with unique qualities and needs. So, they will also be provided with basic, accessible, quality, and culture-based madrasah education."



## **The Commission on Higher Education Policy, Standards, and Guidelines on the Bachelor of Arts in Islamic Studies Program**

Professor Nur N. Hussein, PhD

*Member, Technical Committee on Islamic Studies*

*Office of Policy Standards Development, Commission on Higher Education*

*Chief of the School Operations and Governance Division, Department of Education, Dipolog City*

After his opening words and greetings, Dr. Nur N. Hussein initially talked about the journey milestones of the Bachelor of Arts in Islamic Studies (BAIS) program of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), focusing on its policies, standards, and guidelines (PSG). He further presented a comparison between the old and the proposed modified curriculum of the program. Finally, he disclosed CHED policies and procedures on equivalency and eligibility for the program. With Dr. Hussein's wide experience and expertise as a member of the DepEd, a former lecturer at Universidad de Zamboanga, and a current member of the Technical Committee on Islamic Studies of the CHED, he established himself and his qualifications as a resource in his presentation.

Sometime in early 2000, CHED organized a technical committee to provide expertise on the developmental, disciplinal, and degree program roadmap of the BAIS. The first technical committee, composed of Admiral Joel S. Garcia, Dr. Arturo F. Eustaquio, and Mr. Yusuf Roque Morales, was tasked to look into the curriculum of the BAIS. The second technical committee provided a significant transition in the BAIS curriculum. It was composed of Dr. Mashur Bin-Ghalib Jundam, Dr. Arturo F. Eustaquio, and Prof. Abdulhadi T. Daguit. The third technical committee, composed of Dr. Mashur bin Ghalib Jundam, Prof. Abdulhadi T. Daguit and Dr. Nur N. Hussein, particularly looked into the technical perspective of the curriculum. The fourth and current technical committee, composed of Prof. Abdulhadi T. Daguit, Dr. Nur N. Hussein, Dr. Nefertari A. Arsad, and Dr. Jamel R. Cayamodin are

developing a new curriculum. They have spent many years developing the new BAIS curriculum which is almost ready for submission to CHED to secure the approval of the Commission en banc before it can have a public hearing, which was obviously delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The curriculum which was crafted by the earlier technical committee members resulted in CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 30, Series of 2008 or the Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSG) of the BAIS program. It was disseminated for implementation by all higher education institutions (HEIs) offering Islamic Studies programs. The objectives of the BAIS program were first, to provide a perspective that Islam is a way of life that can be integrated into the economic, sociocultural, political, and legal aspects of communal life. The specializations in this old curriculum were Political Economy and Islamic Arts and Multi-Media Technology. The second objective of the BAIS program was to create a pool of experts and scholars who would contribute to the education of Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as the integration of the Muslim Filipinos into the mainstream of Philippine society and culture.

BAIS is a four-year degree program that features two specializations. One is Political Economy, which is designed to study, analyze, and develop an understanding and appreciation of the global interrelationship of politics and economics. The course offering focused on international political economy, Islamic banking and finance, Islamic laws, and practices on inheritance. The second specialization was Islamic Arts and Multimedia Technology, which was designed to analyze and study the Islamic arts, i.e., calligraphy, geometry, religious arabesque patterns, and other creative designs through digital and multi-media technology. The core courses included elementary, intermediate, and advanced Arabic language courses; the structure, morphology, and syntax of the Arabic language; Arabic literature prior to the Qur'an; and the Qur'an and the historical compilation of *hadith*.

After presenting the journey milestones of the BAIS program, Dr. Hussein provided an overview of the new curriculum which is in its final stage of completion for submission to CHED. The new curriculum has learning competency–based standards founded on outcome-based education (OBE). This was responsive to the Philippine quality education framework in terms of the mastery of competencies and intended to provide foundational knowledge on Islam and its holistic application to human life. Thus, the program purveys the Islamic worldview and its relevance to many disciplines, i.e., the economic, social, cultural, political, and legal contexts; and contributes to socio-economic development through the education of Muslims and non-Muslims, and in the more productive integration of Muslim Filipinos into Philippine society.

The new curriculum contains five specializations, such as Islamic law and jurisprudence, *halal* studies, Philippine Muslim culture and society, Arabic language, and Islamic economics, which supersede the previous two specializations. The new curriculum has a lower number of units required. If the previous curriculum required 63 general education units, 20 core courses, and 42 specialization units, the new one only requires 39 general education units, 48 core courses, 12 specialization units, and 12 foreign language and elective units. The new curriculum also added thesis writing and practicum courses into the program. The practicum program can be done in nongovernment organizations, Islamic embassies, madaris, business establishments (for *halal* studies), government organizations, and other foreign agencies, among others. Once the new curriculum is submitted to the Commission en banc and subjected to a public hearing, it will be ready for implementation.

In the final part of his presentation, Dr. Hussein discussed the BAIS certificate of equivalency and eligibility which was implemented through the CMO No. 2, series of 2008. Anyone who earns a degree overseas can apply for an equivalency or eligibility certificate with CHED through the Technical Committee on the Islamic Studies which evaluates and assesses the credentials of the applicant and finally recommends certification. This enables CHED to recognize the changing foreign policies and the liberalization of trade in goods and services globally by creating a climate for borderless teaching and learning, expanding the opportunities for transnational education, and promoting access to foreign qualification degrees, certificates, and diplomas.

Dr. Hussein also shared the evaluation sheet used in the certification process for a degree equivalency or eligibility. Attached to the evaluation sheet are the letter of request, diploma or certificate, transcript of records, copy of the course description and curriculum, program plan, and passport. The application form and the pertinent requirements are submitted at the CHED office within the applicant's city or region. The regional office endorses the application to the CHED Office of Programs and Standards Development (OPSD), then to the Central office, and to CHED TC-IS for evaluation. There has to be a clear purpose stated in the application for a degree equivalency or eligibility, such as employment, licensure examination application, and further studies, among other reasons. CHED International Affairs verifies the application before the TC-IS members finally approve the application and recommend the issuance of the certificate of equivalency and eligibility by CHED.

## Open Forum

Mr. Kamaruddin Mohammad

*Researcher, UP Institute of Islamic Studies*

### **QUESTION: Is there an assessment tool in the ALIVE program?**

**Ms. Zamar:** In the early days, each program of DepEd had its own structure for curriculum development, delivery, and assessment. But after the rationalization program, the Bureaus of Curriculum Development, Learning Delivery, and Assessment were separated. The Bureau of Curriculum Development now only focuses on the curriculum for Kindergarten to Senior High School, which does not include learning delivery. The problem is that there is a very thin line between curriculum and instruction in delivery. So, no matter how good your curriculum is, your observation is true that there is a need to develop a curriculum support system for better implementation. The curriculum support system includes the teachers, assessment, school leadership, and others. It will be difficult to enhance the curriculum if the support system fails. No matter how good the policies are, they will amount to curriculum failure or curriculum policy failure if the support system fails. Because of the changes in the structure in DepEd, we also need to restructure how to provide a good continuity in the programs. It will involve the Bureaus on curriculum development, learning delivery, assessment, and learning resources. We have to capacitate our teachers to ensure good learning delivery and that would be under the Bureau of Learning Delivery to make the ALIVE program delivery better.

**QUESTION: What are the methodologies of monitoring and evaluation of the ALIVE program for both the teachers and students? Since its implementation, what has been achieved so far? What are the quality indicators that directly manifested in the ALIVE students? Were there exceptional or promising ALIVE students under this curriculum?**

**Ms. Zamar:** These questions are related to learning delivery, which is not under my bureau, but I will have to answer these questions.

Since the time that I handled this program and made some enhancements to the curriculum, the highest level of capacity was provided to our teachers. My colleagues in DepEd also went and visited schools to monitor these schools offering the ALIVE program. We found out that some of these schools are nonexistent yet receiving financial assistance for this program. That's one reason that DepEd restructured in terms of monitoring and evaluation. Then they finalized the list of schools to be supported. The other thing that DepEd does is capacitate the teachers through the LET program. The teachers were helped in the areas of learning the English language and how they can be assisted as LET passers. But they have excellent skills in the Arabic language because they are Muslims and have good knowledge in teaching Islamic values. So though these teachers are not LET passers, they have the content in Arabic language and Islamic values. Thus, DepEd assessed and took them in on contracts of service and hoping that later on, they will get equivalent points to become tenured teachers. These are some of the monitoring and evaluation tasks being done for the teachers. Because of the curriculum enhancement program, we are still in the process of bringing them out and, hopefully, including the MELCs. What we are using now is still the Revised Elementary Madrasah curriculum (REMC). These are two different curricula. We will come up with the monitoring and evaluation tool for the enhanced curriculum including the MELCs.

**QUESTION:** Thank you for your very informative presentation about the ALIVE program of DepEd. There are Muslim children whose grasp of the Arabic language and Islamic values is already deeply rooted. Is there an accreditation and competency examination for them to get accelerated? Is there an Alternative Learning System (ALS) of the ALIVE program which can be offered to Muslim out of school youth and homeschoolers?

**Ms. Zamar:** The common feedback I am getting from the old curriculum, which is the REMC, is that it is an advanced curriculum already. That's why we have to adjust it a bit so the children can cope. The major revisions were done in the Kindergarten up to Grade 3

Arabic language curriculum before they can do the grammar part in Grade 4. However, I wonder if these students you're mentioning are doing Islamic Studies in private schools. Because that's where we understand they have an advanced Arabic language program and where there is much mastery of the language. While in DepEd, we only have 40 minutes of Arabic class.

So, the question is, if these learners from DepEd can take an acceleration test. I don't think we have one right now. But we'll see if we can develop one under the Special Curricular Program Division. It is in this division where we recognize the gifted and talented students. So, we also wanted to recognize students who have language skills and were gifted in it. There's going to be another set of curricula on how we can also help the gifted and talented or probably just an assessment tool for the advanced learners. But this will come later on under the Bureau of Educational Assessment.

I also mentioned the foreign languages program which DepEd offers in Grade 7. However, this is limited to French and Chinese. If Arabic can be added to these foreign languages, then even the teachers can enroll and take the standardized tests for language proficiency. So, it can be a potential help. But the advantage of the ALIVE program is that it is a more advanced program. For as early as Grade 3, the children have a deeper knowledge of the Arabic language. Whereas in the foreign languages program, the proficiency level is very basic. But they can complement the ALIVE program if the Arabic language will be included.

As for the ALS program, it is still being developed in the Senior High School (SHS) program for ALIVE teachers. In terms of policy, we want to develop first the SHS program before getting into the ALIVE-ALS program so that we can integrate, say, *halal* trading in the SHS entrepreneurship classes or in employment and work as translators, tourist guides, etc.

**QUESTION:** Is there an age limit to the enrollees of the ALIVE program? Would you recommend this to the Balik-Islam as their population is growing? Though most of them are in advanced age, they still want to know more about Islam. So, can they be catered to by the ALIVE program?

**Ms. Zamar:** It's hard to respond to that question. But there are times when we also have Muslim teachers who are not well-versed in the Arabic language but are excellent in their Islamic values and practice. I normally get them for what they can offer in the Islamic values because if teachers are really passionate about their craft, they would capacitate themselves, particularly if there is something they can do for the community and others. But for DepEd, we still would want to tap other schools which can help us with that need. Again, this is under the Bureau of Learning Delivery not under Curriculum. I guess we can help the Balik-Islam teachers to capacitate them so they can help teach the ALIVE program. But I also hope they would find help outside DepEd as we don't have enough resources for them now. And hopefully in the future, we can also help them.

**Mr. Mohammad:** If I may share, I think TESDA has a program. Perhaps you may coordinate with them. The TESDA program is usually provided to those who will go overseas, where they teach the Arabic language. DepEd can tap TESDA on this.

**Ms. Zamar:** That's good. Thank you for sharing. DepEd has been pushing this because what we have is the Special Program in Foreign Language (SPFL) for the teachers. This has been running for quite awhile but still without the Arabic language. Hopefully, when we push for the Arabic language, then everyone, including the old teachers can benefit from it. This will capacitate the teachers and test their competency on language proficiency because we use standardized examinations for this. Thank you, too, for letting me know about the TESDA program. We can also utilize that.



**QUESTION: Why is BAIS not offered at UP Open University (OU)?**

**Dr. Hussein:** I also cannot answer why BAIS is not offered in the Open University. But for the other higher education institutions, they have been offering this program since 2008 when it was released. So may I suggest that Dr. Arsad would answer this as a fellow member of the TC Islamic Studies?

**Dr. Arsad:** The UPOU currently offers one subject, Islamic Education, under its Faculty of Education. I am the one teaching it, too. But earlier, when the previous TC IS chairperson, Dr. Mashur Bin-Ghalib Jundam, was the Dean of the Institute of Islamic Studies in UP, there were already talks between him and UPOU on offering Islamic Studies subjects at UPOU. However, I understand that these talks did not push through. So, the transition of Islamic Studies programs and the offering on an online platform did not come about. It was only after 2010 that the Islamic Education program course package was formulated.

**QUESTION: How do we make sure that what is taught in the classrooms reflects the goals and visions and missions of the curriculum?**

**Ms. Zamar:** In the development of the ALIVE program, we made sure that what is reflected in the curriculum is what we focused on. It is all about the Basic Education and what was developmentally appropriate, within the children's capacity, and what is relevant in the times. After we agreed on the theories and provided guiding principles, then we had a curriculum framework. We explained there the rationale, the guiding principles where the curriculum was anchored, etc. So we have this anchor which manifested the extent of how we can teach the Arabic language and Islamic Values Education. Then monitoring and evaluation will come in after the implementation of the curriculum. So I want to assure everyone that there is always a review and revision of the curriculum every three years; there is a cycle that we follow. But if it is a major revision, it is taken on immediately. We look into the revision, draft it into

a policy, then implement it. But generally, we follow the three-year revision cycle.

**Dr. Hussein:** As for the 2008 curriculum of the BAIS program, a few of the measures that reflect the realization of the curriculum are the students' thesis and on-the-job training, where they demonstrate their skills and knowledge. The TC IS also reviews the curriculum particularly looking into certain skills and competencies. Then revision comes in. If you notice, there is a long transition in the courses as there is a need to constantly check the needs in the industry and align them to the changing times. So, in the new curriculum, we have adopted the outcomes-based education, which is anchored on the Philippine Quality Framework, so that right away the student can demonstrate mastery of competencies early on in the program.

**QUESTION: Is there a *Halal* Studies course or related subjects being offered at the Institute of Islamic Studies in UP? If there is, can a non-UP student enroll?**

**Dr. Arsad:** As of the moment, we only have one course, which is Halal Lifestyles that is being taught at the Institute, and this is going to be proposed as a major elective. This was newly formulated and is being offered as a special topics course. We don't have a Halal program at the institute yet. But the faculty has been doing sessions on academic program improvement and this is one of the things we also like to offer, an area of specialization in Halal Studies.

**Dr. Hussein:** In the new curriculum for BAIS, Halal Studies is one of the specializations. The courses within this specialization are very intensive. So, I hope we are able to wait for the implementation of the new curriculum.

**QUESTION: Can a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science enroll in the BAIS program? Will some of the units be credited to reduce the overall units required to complete the course?**

**Dr. Hussein:** The answer is yes, especially the general education courses, they can be credited across the curriculum. The difference would just be the specialization. So, if you submit for an evaluation of Social Science subjects to be credited to the BAIS program, you will most likely start on subjects for the specialization you have chosen.

**QUESTION:** In 2019, when I graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Shari'ah, majoring in Islamic Studies in a university overseas, I requested from CHED Region 9 for equivalency but until now there is no result. May I know what makes the process long?

**Dr. Hussein:** Are you saying that there is no assessment result yet? Or you were not issued an assessment? Because usually for us in the TC IS (Technical Committee on Islamic Studies), once you were endorsed by the Central Office it means that your papers are complete. So, we will immediately look into those attachments and start the assessment. Once the process is completed, and the four members of the TC affix their signatures, the paper goes back to the Central Office. They then communicate to the Regional Office where the applicant filed. So, I cannot really answer where your papers are but just to say that on our part as TC members, we immediately act on endorsements from CHED offices. I would rather recommend a follow-up of your application and ask for a detailed update of its status from the Region 9 office. I hope we can verify it for you. May I know your name?

**QUESTION:** The DepEd graphic organizers, rubrics, or curriculum guides are lengthy and hard to read for non-Tagalog speakers. Is there a way to simplify it in the teaching of Arabic as a second language and for specific purposes?

**Ms. Zamar:** Yes. If this is the rubrics or curriculum guide as a whole, this is under the Bureau of Learning Delivery. They're the ones who are doing the rubrics. But if it is the curriculum guide, it is under our division. If it is written in Filipino, we have a few subjects written in Filipino and the rubrics are also in Filipino. And those written in English have English rubrics. So, if it is in Arabic

language, then there will be different rubrics for that as well as the enhanced ALIVE curriculum.

But in relation to the Filipino rubrics, that would be on the Islamic Values Education, which was aligned to the Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (ESP). When the Islamic Values Education was crafted, it was in Filipino, including the curriculum guide. We should have thought about this concern earlier especially for the non-native Filipino speakers and translated it into English. But I think I got the concern, and we can discuss this at DepEd.

**QUESTION: Why is it that there is no Islamic Education in the new curriculum that was submitted to CHED?**

**Dr. Hussein:** Is it referring to the Teacher Education Program (TEP)? Honestly, when we crafted the new curriculum, we harmonized it with the old curriculum. My take on the question is that it may be referring to the certification for teachers' education. In the BAIS program, there is a 24-unit requirement for the TEP before taking the PRC (Professional Regulations Commission) Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). In the previous curriculum, we've considered Teacher Education as a possible specialization. But it became an issue because there is a separate PSG for the TEP. So, it is not possible to simply insert a program. The option is to take extra 18 units in Education after completing the BAIS program and before qualifying to take the LET. It is up to the PRC where they will be classified, whether in Social Science or whatever the specialization is in the BAIS program.

**QUESTION: When there are not enough qualified teachers, what do DepEd and CHED do? How do you provide a solution to this need?**

**Dr. Hussein:** On the part of CHED, the higher education institutions implement the BAIS program. So, in terms of identifying the qualifications of the teachers in the program, it is up to the institution to decide. CHED simply sets a minimum standard for

the teachers' qualifications in the PSG. It is up to the institutions if they need to add other criteria. On the other hand, when we conduct a public hearing, all the details in the PSG, say, of BAIS are discussed thoroughly.

**Ms. Zamar:** Did you know that during the pandemic, there was a huge increase in the enrollment in the public schools because many private schools were closed? So, DepEd also wanted to look at the need for hiring teachers which was a concern in the pre-, during, and post-pandemic. But it is a good problem because it means that new jobs are being opened for ALIVE teachers. Yet still, we face the same recurring concerns on teachers who are non-LET passers, are of lower salary grade, very few qualified teachers who are Muslim, resorting to contract of service, etc. So, if you know of anyone who wants to apply at DepEd, we're very open to receiving new teachers and preferably, they are LET passers. On the other hand, what normally happens when Muslim teachers are LET passers, like at times when we get really good teachers, say, master teachers, they would normally take other subjects because they are really good at them. So that is another issue. We want these teachers to focus on the ALIVE program so that the quality of ALIVE classes won't be jeopardized. So, I can support this concern in terms of policy, but we need qualified and good teachers for the long haul to focus on the students and the classes.

**QUESTION: Are there instructional materials for the ALIVE program? Who are involved in the preparation of these materials?**

**Ms. Zamar:** Yes, we have. In the old curriculum, we have instructional materials. However, in the enhanced curriculum, we are still in the process of working on the instructional materials. I've been encouraging my writers, those who developed the curriculum, to also be a part of the team of writers who will do the learning materials because it's quite difficult to develop materials if there is no good understanding of the curriculum. There should be a close working relationship between the curriculum and the learning resources and learning delivery for good program implementation, assessment,

and material production. My roles would be to encourage such alignment and to make sure that the alignment is kept.

**QUESTION:** We suggest including in the *Halal* Studies the Islamic Commercial Transactions in *Halal* Studies. In this context, the course will be properly guided by Islamic jurisprudence. We also suggest that in the Political Economy Studies (specialization) if you may add Diplomacy Studies to it and Islamic jurisprudence. Both can form as foundational courses for prelaw students and for the degree holders to qualify for the special Shari’ah Bar examinations. For Political Economy and Diplomacy Studies, the purpose is for employability and for acquiring professional license status under the foreign service examination.

**Dr. Hussein:** Thank you. Those suggestions are well noted. When the new BAIS program gets implemented, the new specialization will be on Islamic economics, which includes the other courses on Islamic banking and finance.

**QUESTION:** Is there a course anywhere in the Philippines that caters to interreligious dialogue?

**Dr. Hussein:** I wouldn’t want to preempt anything but one of the approaches we use in the BAIS curriculum is the interreligious dialogue. Perhaps when the new curriculum is implemented in the higher education institutions, then this can address that need.

**QUESTION:** I am an online Qur’an tutor, and I teach basic Arabic and Arabic Qur’an reading and writing. But most of the parents also request us to teach Islamic values. I found your curriculum very comprehensive for my students. Will DepEd allow me to use the ALIVE curriculum in my online classes?

**Ms. Zamar:** Of course, you can. In fact, we are just waiting for the approval of the uploading of the ALIVE program on online education platforms. I’ve been trying to move heaven and earth for the implementation of this program, which is in its last phase.

Give me 12 years to implement the curriculum, and we will make a difference. We will produce the teachers that we lack now. We will see changes in the children to make them advocates of Islam. These children who will benefit from the curriculum will hopefully, one day become the teachers that we want for our ALIVE classes. So those are what we want, to see these children graduate from the ALIVE program, graduate from UP, and eventually go back to teach the ALIVE program. They will be the change-makers that we want to see in and for our Muslim community. We also have various learning materials which you can access in the DepEd learning resources portal. Our DepEd teachers, parents, and other users can freely access those resources. The only exceptions are the school operators who are not DepEd recognized. They can always use any of our curricula in Math, Science, or ALIVE programs for as long as they are available in the resource portal. Hopefully, by next year, all of these resources will be available in the portal. What we have currently are workshops on the transliteration of Arabic words in the ALIVE curriculum. I hope you can wait for the other materials.

**QUESTION: I hope that the concept of Tawheed be taught in the new curriculum of BAIS because it seems like this was not taught in the old curriculum.**

**Dr. Hussein:** The suggestion is well noted. I haven't presented details of the new curriculum to you. But rest assured that your suggestions are well-considered. We are still in the process of finalizing the new curriculum before submitting it to the Commission en banc. So, I can only provide an overview of the new curriculum. The other thing is what some of you are asking if they can be invited to the public hearing. My answer is: yes, all the higher education institutions will need to be represented in the public hearing for the new curriculum of the BAIS program.

## **Executive Summary**

Assistant Professor Nefertari A. Arsad, PhD

To end the webinar, Dr. Arsad first off, recognized and gave her appreciation to Ms. Mildred B. Zamar and Dr. Nur Hussien as the resource speakers, and thanked the participants and the working committee behind the event. She further acknowledged the breadth of the presentations, how both the basic and higher education programs had evolved since their inception, and how much work is yet to be done to further integrate and improve Muslim education within the Philippine education system.

Dr. Arsad highlighted that both the DepEd and CHED conducted a streamlining of the Muslim education curriculum particularly due to its interdisciplinary nature as mandated in the Philippine education quality framework, partly due to the new demands of the pandemic and mostly due to the streamlining of the most essential learning competencies (MELCs). The benefit of streamlining includes addressing the question of overcrowding of the curriculum with the approval of the respective committees and after going through certain protocols.

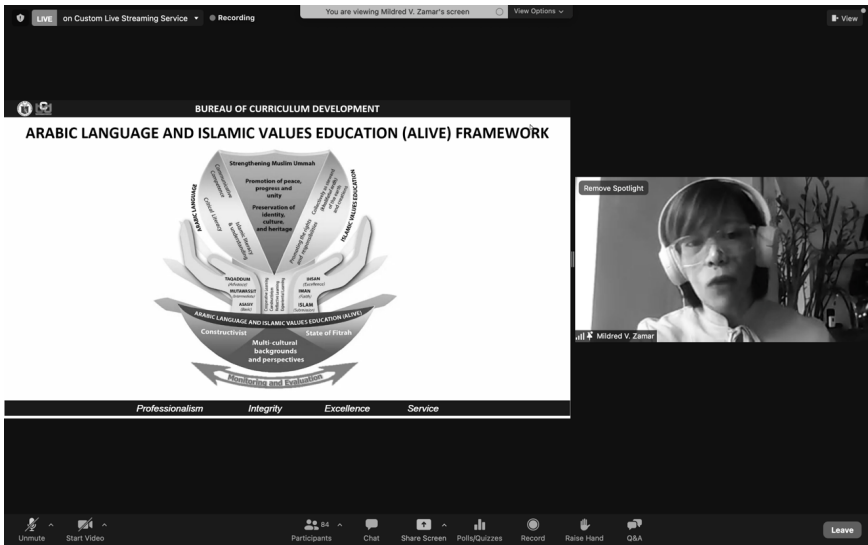
As to the questions posed by the participants, Dr. Arsad noted that some were related to curriculum delivery, particularly the ALIVE program implementation which the speaker promised to recommend to the Bureau of Learning Delivery as this is within its purview. Some questions involved the many aspects of curriculum implementation or its translation on the ground; while the other questions were on equivalency and eligibility and how important it is for the CHED to facilitate these concerns. Finally, Dr. Arsad recognized that there were certainly excellent inputs and concerns fielded during the webinar and that open discussion was the only way they can be addressed.



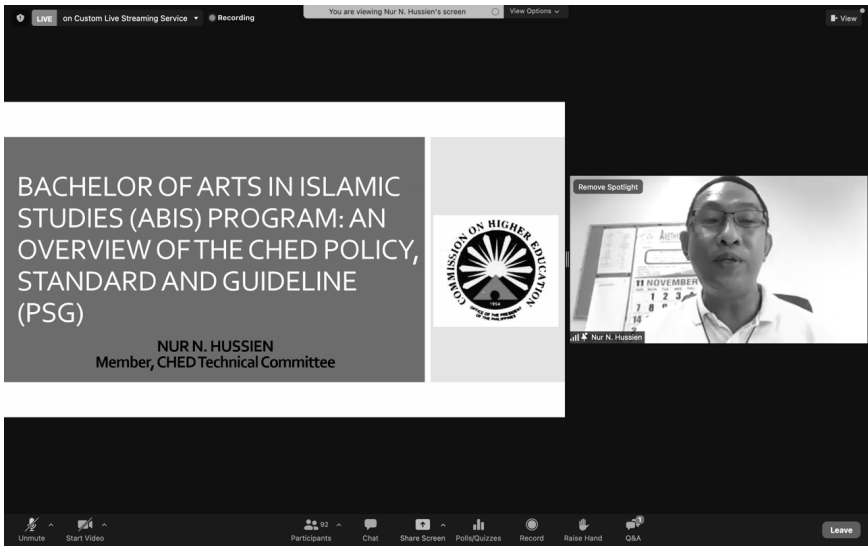
## Photo Documentation



The speakers, organizers, and some of the attendees of the webinar on Muslim Institutional Development in Education.



Ms. Mildred B. Zamar of the Bureau of Curriculum discusses the Muslim Education Program of the Department of Education.



Dr. Nur N. Hussein of the CHED Technical Committee shares the journey milestones of the Bachelor of Arts in Islamic Studies.



Ms. Mildred B. Zamar and Dr. Nur N. Hussein responds to the questions raised by the attendees during the open forum facilitated by Mr. Kamaruddin Mohammad.



Dr. Nefertari A. Arsad summarizes the key points of the presentations as well as the questions and recommendations raised by the participants.

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CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

Lower Ground Floor, Ang Bahay ng Alumni  
Magsaysay Avenue, University of the Philippines  
Diliman, Quezon City 1101

Telephone: (02) 8981-8500 loc. 4266 to 4268 / (02) 8426-0955

Email: [cids@up.edu.ph](mailto:cids@up.edu.ph) / [cidspublications@up.edu.ph](mailto:cidspublications@up.edu.ph)

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