

Three Years of Project ALTAS (Alternative Learning Through Accessible Services): A Journey of Educational Empowerment and Life Transformation

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<p><i>The persistent challenge of out-of-school children, youth, and adults (OSCY) in the Philippines highlights the need for collaborative and context-responsive educational interventions that address both access to and quality of learning. This study assessed the impact of Project ALTAS (Alternative Learning Through Accessible Services), a university–public school partnership implemented to support Alternative Learning System (ALS) learners in Molino, Bacoor, Cavite. Using an embedded mixed-methods research design, the study examined the effects of Project ALTAS over a three-year period (2023–2025) on learners’ educational empowerment, perceived life transformation, and overall program impact.</i></p> <p><i>Quantitative data were collected from 160 ALTAS completers through archived records and a statistically validated Likert-type survey ($\alpha = 0.86$), while qualitative data were gathered through expert validated focus group discussions interview protocol with 12 ALTAS learners, two ALS advisers, and five parents. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were employed, with integration achieved through data triangulation. Results showed that Project ALTAS consistently engaged a large proportion of ALS learners, with 48.7% completing the program and 38.9% graduating from ALS across three cohorts. Quantitative findings revealed high levels of educational empowerment (overall mean = 3.82), life transformation (overall mean = 3.48), and perceived overall impact (overall mean = 3.41). Program evaluation results further indicated an Excellent overall implementation (mean = 4.83).</i></p> <p><i>Qualitative narratives substantiated these findings, revealing that learners experienced increased confidence, clearer life direction, improved responsibility, and renewed hope for education and work. Advisers and parents validated these changes by noting enhanced motivation, well-being, and positive outlook among learners. Overall, the findings demonstrate that Project ALTAS functioned as a holistic and effective intervention that complemented ALS implementation. The study recommends the institutionalization of Project ALTAS as a sustained program to strengthen its long-term impact and scalability in supporting marginalized learners.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Alternative Learning System, community extension, educational empowerment, life transformation, mixed-methods research, Project ALTAS.</p>
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Introduction

The state of education in the Philippines continues to face significant challenges, particularly in ensuring equitable access for all learners. According to the Philippine Statistics

Authority (PSA), nearly 11 million children and young Filipinos are not attending formal school. Of the 42.8 million household population aged five to 24 years

old, 10.7 million—or 25 percent—are classified as out-of-school children and youth (OSCY) (PSA, 2020 Census of Population and Housing, cited in Desiderio, May 2024). For School Year 2020, approximately 18.6 percent of children aged 5 to 24 were not enrolled in school. The most common reasons include having already finished elementary or post-secondary education, the need to work, lack of personal interest, early marriage, and financial constraints (PSA, September 2023). In addition to these alarming statistics, public schools—particularly in geographically isolated and economically disadvantaged areas—continue to struggle with limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient teacher support. Such conditions often hinder the delivery of quality education and contribute to high dropout and attrition rates. The situation calls for targeted interventions that address not only access to education but also the quality of learning experiences provided to marginalized communities.

Recognizing these realities, the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XIV, Section 2 affirms the State's responsibility to “establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society.” It also mandates the promotion of non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems to address community-specific needs. Republic Act 9155, or the Governance Act for Basic Education, operationalizes this mandate through the establishment of the Alternative Learning System (ALS)—a parallel learning system designed to provide basic education to out-of-school children, youth, and adults.

In the province of Cavite alone, there were 11,687 ALS enrollees in 2020, with 81.79% enrolled in the Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Secondary Program, supported by 153 ALS learning facilitators (Cavite Ecological Profile, 2020). ALS offers flexible, community-based education, often conducted in barangay halls, community learning centers, libraries, or learners' homes, led by mobile teachers and instructional managers. Its adaptability makes it a crucial strategy for reaching those who face economic, geographic, cultural, or social barriers to formal schooling. However, ALS programs require sustained partnerships with local stakeholders to expand their reach and improve program quality.

Guided by its philosophy that “Character Building is Nation Building” and its calling to be Helpers of God, the Humanities and Social Sciences Cluster of the University of Perpetual Help System DALTA – Molino Campus established Sustainable ALTAS (Alternative Learning Through Accessible Services) Program as a strategic community extension initiative. The project seeks

to bridge the educational gap for OSCYs and marginalized learners by leveraging the University's resources, expertise, and manpower to complement existing public school and ALS efforts. Anchored on the HELPERS Framework (Health & Nutrition, Education, Livelihood & Technology, Psycho-social Intervention, Environment, Risk Management, and Sports & Wellness) and aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities), Project ALTAS aims to improve both access to and quality of education for underserved communities.

This initiative also supports the Philippine Education for All (EFA) goals and upholds Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which asserts that everyone has the right to education. As part of the University's Community Extension Services (CES), Project ALTAS not only facilitates alternative learning pathways but also nurtures holistic development—instilling values, enhancing skills, and fostering community empowerment. In doing so, it advances the mission of the HUMSS Cluster, the CES Office, and the entire UPHSD Molino Campus to produce Christ-centered, service-oriented, and research-driven individuals with great social concern, committed to quality education and nation-building.

Specifically, ALTAS Project aims to: a) Support the Education for All initiative and the right of every individual to education as upheld by the Philippine educational system, and contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals on Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4), and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10); b) Conduct community needs assessment of ALS learners/Parents – for the improvement of the delivery of the ALTAS Program.; c) Conduct team teaching, psycho-social and wellness activities and provide teacher training programs, particularly for educators engaged in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) of public schools offered by the Department of Education; d) Share resources—including human resources, learning materials, infrastructure, and programs—for the effective and successful implementation of the ALS Program in the City Schools Division of Bacoor; e) Teach and actively participate in the facilitation of learning competency/strands for the ALS Program in the partner school, with emphasis on delivering the competencies set by the Department of Education; f) Ensure that all services are accessible and aligned with sustainable Community Extension Services (CES) initiatives, thereby contributing to the attainment of ALS objectives; and g) Promote the C-CASED characteristics and values—Christ-centered, Creative, Auspicious, Skillful, Exemplary, and Dynamic—to foster stronger communities, sustain CES initiatives, and achieve the department's target goals as outlined in its EOMS and Quality Objectives.

Table 1. Enrollment History

Batch	Enrolled ALS Learners in a Public Junior High School	Enrolled ALS Learners in ALTAS Project	ALTAS Completers		ALS Graduates	
2023	123	87	46	52.9	57	46.3
2024	120	90	47	52.2	50	41.7
2025	145	96	40	41.7	44	30.3
Total	388	273	133	48.7%	151	38.9%

The table shows that across three batches (2023–2025), Project ALTAS consistently engaged a substantial proportion of ALS learners and contributed positively to program completion and graduation outcomes. Out of 388 ALS enrollees in the partner public junior high school, 273 learners (70.4%) participated in the ALTAS project. From these, 133 learners (48.7%) successfully completed the ALTAS program, indicating that nearly half of the participants were able to sustain engagement in the extended learning intervention. Moreover, 151 learners (38.9%) of the total ALS enrollees graduated from the ALS program during the three-year period, suggesting that ALTAS provided meaningful academic support that complemented formal ALS instruction. Although completion and graduation rates slightly declined in the 2025 batch, the overall trend demonstrates that ALTAS played an important role in improving learner retention and progression, reinforcing its contribution to educational empowerment among ALS learners.

To assess the impact of Project ALTAS, implemented over three years, on learners' educational attainment and perceived life transformation using an embedded mixed-methods approach. The study aimed to:

1. To trace the current status of the ALTAS Project completers;
2. To assess the effect of Project ALTAS using both quantitative indicators and qualitative narratives of learner-beneficiaries, ALS advisers and parents, specifically focusing on a) Educational empowerment; and b) Perceived Life transformation;
3. To determine the perceived overall impact of Project ALTAS based on integrated quantitative and qualitative findings; and
4. To develop data-driven and context-responsive recommendations to guide the future direction and enhancement of Project ALTAS.

Methodology

This study adopted an embedded mixed-methods research design to assess the impact of Project ALTAS on ALS

learners over a three-year period (2023–2025). The approach allowed the researchers to integrate quantitative outcomes with in-depth qualitative insights, providing a comprehensive understanding of the program's effectiveness and lived impact on its beneficiaries. The qualitative component will employ narrative analysis to explore the experiences of key stakeholders, namely the ALS learners, advisers, and parents. This strand will focus on recurring themes such as educational empowerment and perceived quality of life, and will serve to explain, enrich, and contextualize the quantitative findings. Meanwhile, the quantitative component will concentrate on measurable indicators, including the data on ALTAS completers who pursued higher education and those who entered the workforce and the perceived effect of the project to their education and life's meaning. It will also include Overall impact data will further focus on students' overall assessment of the ALTAS program, particularly in relation to their educational aspirations and motivation to continue learning, as well as their perceived quality of life. In addition, program evaluation results will be utilized to complement and strengthen the overall impact interpretation of the findings.

The study was conducted in a public junior high school in partnership with a private deregulated university, both located in Molino, Bacoar, Cavite. A formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was forged between the two institutions for the implementation of Project ALTAS (Alternative Learning through Accessible Services). The public school offers the Alternative Learning System (ALS) program for junior high school learners, while the private university provides extended learning opportunities to ALS learners from the partner public school. As part of the partnership, ALTAS learners attend regular classes and review sessions at the private university twice a week. This collaborative partnership has been sustained for three years, aimed at supporting learners' academic progress and life development.

For the quantitative component, the population consisted of 273 ALTAS learners (ALS learners from the partner public school who were enrolled in the ALTAS project).

Using the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator with a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level, a sample size of 160 ALTAS completers was determined. For the qualitative component, respondents were selected through purposive sampling. A total of 12 ALTAS completers and ALS graduates (four from each batch: 2023, 2024, and 2025) who had already graduated from the ALS program and were currently studying or working full-time participated in the study. To further substantiate narratives of educational empowerment and perceived life transformation, two ALS faculty advisers and five parents were included as additional key informants.

For the quantitative strand, data were gathered through archived institutional records and a researcher-developed Likert-type survey questionnaire designed to measure current status, project's effect on perceived life transformation, and educational empowerment and learning outcomes realization. The survey instrument was pilot-tested among 20 ALS completers to establish its reliability resulting to Cronbach alpha value of 0.84 (Educational Empowerment), 0.87 (Life Transformation), and 0.88 (Perceived Overall Impact), while the institutional evaluation tool used for implemented activities was already standardized. For the qualitative strand, data were collected through five Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) using an interview protocol with open-ended questions tailored to each stakeholder group, namely ALTAS learners, parents, and ALS advisers. These questions encouraged participants to narrate their experiences and observations regarding Project ALTAS, particularly its impact on educational empowerment and life transformation. The interview protocol underwent expert validation by three specialists in community extension services, psychology, and educational management. Their feedback helped refine the tool in terms of content validity, clarity, and cultural sensitivity, consistent with recommendations in qualitative research (Robiños et al., 2022).

Following the approval of the research proposal, quantitative data were collected from official project records and documentation of activities conducted from 2022 to 2025. Survey questionnaires measuring perceived

life transformation, educational empowerment, and overall impact were distributed to ALTAS completers with the assistance of former and current ALS advisers. For the qualitative component, once the interview protocol was finalized and validated, five Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with selected stakeholders (3 groups of ALTAS learners, 1 group of parents and 1 group for advisers). These interviews were held face-to-face scheduled depending on participant availability and accessibility in the partner private university. Participants were encouraged to share narratives regarding the effects of Project ALTAS on the learners' educational experiences and perceived quality of life.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, particularly frequency distributions and mean scores, to summarize patterns and trends. Qualitative data were transcribed verbatim and subjected to thematic analysis. This process involved familiarization with the data, coding recurring ideas, and grouping similar codes into overarching themes. The analysis followed the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006), which is widely recognized in qualitative research. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative findings enabled data triangulation, enhancing the credibility and depth of the results and allowing the researchers to draw well-informed conclusions about the long-term impact of Project ALTAS.

The research team strictly adhered to ethical standards to protect the rights and dignity of all participants. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents after they were fully briefed on the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights, including the option to withdraw at any point without penalty. Confidentiality was ensured by anonymizing all responses and securely storing collected data in encrypted digital folders accessible only to the research team. Furthermore, the entire research protocol underwent review and received approval from the University's Ethics Review Board, confirming compliance with institutional and research ethical guidelines.

Results and Discussions

Current Status of the ALTAS Project Completer

Table 2. Current status of the ALTAS Project completers

Current Status	f	%
1. I am currently studying (Senior High School/College) only.	40	25.0
2. I am currently studying and working part-time.	63	39.4
3. I am currently studying and working full-time.	12	7.5
4. I am no longer studying but working part-time.	8	5.0
5. I am no longer studying but working full-time.	24	15.0
6. I am not studying and currently unemployed.	0	0
7. I am not studying and actively seeking employment.	3	1.9

8. I am not studying and currently self-employed.	1	0.6
9. I am taking a break from studying and working (gap year).	1	0.6
10. I am enrolled in a short-term course or training program.	8	5.0
Total	160	100

Note: They can only have 1 answer. Legend: f = frequency, % = percentage. $n = 160$

The findings of this study, which show that 76.9% of ALTAS completers remain engaged in education-related pursuits, align closely with existing literature on post-ALS pathways in the Philippines. Previous studies indicate that many ALS completers proceed to Senior High School as an intermediate step before advancing to higher education or employment (Pascual et al., 2022). Similarly, several Philippine studies report that a significant proportion of ALS graduates eventually enroll in college or bachelor's degree programs after obtaining their certification (Calabit, 2022; Pascual et al., 2022), supporting the observed trend that ALTAS completers continue formal education or skills training.

However, the findings also intersect with research suggesting that many ALS learners are already of working age and initially engage in ALS primarily to secure the secondary diploma required for employment (Espejon

et al., 2024). This partially explains why a substantial number of ALTAS completers combine schooling with part-time or full-time work. Consistent with Jimenez et al. (2026), the present results demonstrate that ALS—when strengthened through support programs such as ALTAS—functions not only as a credential for employment but also as a bridge to further education and technical-vocational training. The absence of unemployed respondents in this study further underscores the role of structured academic support and extended learning opportunities in enabling ALS completers to transition toward productive educational and career pathways, reinforcing the dual function of ALS as both a workforce credential and a foundation for lifelong learning.

Project ALTAS on Completers Educational Empowerment

Table 3. Perceived Effect of Project ALTAS on Educational Empowerment

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1 Project ALTAS motivated me to continue my studies. (<i>Ang Project ALTAS ay nagbigay sa akin ng motibasyon upang ipagpatuloy ang aking pag-aaral</i>).	3.88	Strongly Agree
2 Because of ALTAS, I became more confident in my academic abilities. (<i>Dahil sa ALTAS, mas naging kumpiyansa ako sa aking kakayahang akademiko</i>).	3.78	Strongly Agree
3 ALTAS helped me develop better study habits and learning discipline. (<i>Nakatulong ang ALTAS sa paglinang ng mas maayos na gawi sa pag-aaral at disiplina sa pagkatuto</i>).	3.83	Strongly Agree
4 I now have clearer educational goals because of my experience in ALTAS. (<i>Mas malinaw na ngayon ang aking mga layuning pang-edukasyon dahil sa aking karanasan sa ALTAS</i>).	3.75	Strongly Agree
5 Project ALTAS prepared me for higher education or further training. (<i>Inihanda ako ng Project ALTAS para sa mas mataas na edukasyon o karagdagang pagsasanay</i>).	3.83	Strongly Agree
6 ALTAS increased my interest and love for learning. (<i>Pinalakas ng ALTAS ang aking interes at pagmamahal sa pagkatuto</i>).	3.84	Strongly Agree
7 Through ALTAS, I learned skills that are useful for my future career. (<i>Sa pamamagitan ng ALTAS, natutunan ko ang mga kasanayang kapaki-pakinabang sa aking magiging trabaho</i>).	3.78	Strongly Agree
8 ALTAS helped me believe that I can succeed academically. (<i>Tinulungan ako ng ALTAS na maniwala na kaya kong magtagumpay sa akademikong aspeto</i>).	3.84	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean and Perceived Effect	3.82	Highly Empowering

Interpretation range: 2.51 – 3.25 = Agree & Empowering; 3.26 – 4.00 Strongly Agree & Highly Empowering

The results indicate a very strong positive effect of Project ALTAS on the educational empowerment of the completers. All eight indicators obtained high mean scores ranging from 3.75 to 3.88, all interpreted as *Strongly Agree*. The highest mean (3.88) was recorded for the

statement “Project ALTAS motivated me to continue my studies,” showing that the program effectively encouraged learners to persist in their educational journey. Similarly, high ratings for improved study habits (3.83), increased interest in learning (3.84), and belief in academic success

(3.84) reflect how ALTAS strengthened learners' motivation, discipline, and self-efficacy.

Moreover, the overall mean score of 3.82, interpreted as *Highly Empowering*, further confirms the substantial impact of the project. Learners strongly agreed that ALTAS helped clarify their educational goals (3.75), prepared them for higher education or further training (3.83), and equipped them with skills useful for their future careers (3.78). These findings suggest that Project ALTAS not only addressed immediate academic needs but also fostered long-term aspirations and readiness for continued learning, demonstrating its effectiveness in promoting educational empowerment among ALS completers.

Emergent Theme: Rebuilding Academic Confidence and Purpose through Structured Support and Meaningful Learning

The narratives of ALTAS completers reveal that educational empowerment was deeply experienced as the restoration of confidence, skills, and purpose in learning. These lived experiences are powerfully echoed and validated by the observations of ALS advisers and parents, who witnessed the learners' change firsthand. One learner articulated how ALTAS reshaped their learning identity:

Student 4: *"Project ALTAS has helped me in several areas. It taught me how to stay organized, keep track of my progress, and work toward specific goals... Overall, the program has helped me become a more confident and independent learner."*

This experience is strongly supported by an adviser, who observed similar behavioral changes among learners:

Adviser 1: *"Project ALTAS improves learners' academic skills and motivation by giving them personalized instruction, engaging learning materials, and a positive learning environment... ALS learners become more confident in how they express themselves."*

Together, these narratives demonstrate that empowerment was not abstract, but visible in learners' independence, participation, and self-expression, reinforcing the quantitative results on improved study habits and self-efficacy. Another student highlighted how ALTAS rekindled hope and the belief that education is still possible:

Student 1: *"Tumaas ang kumpiyansa ko dahil nakita kong kaya ko pa palang matuto at umunlad... Napagtanto ko na hindi pa huli para abutin ang aking mga pangarap."* **English translation:** My confidence increased because I realized I can still learn and grow. I

realized that it is not too late to reach my dreams.

A parent strongly affirmed this renewed motivation:

Parent 3: *"Ang sabi niya sa akin, 'Mama, gusto kong pumasok sa SHS. Gusto kong matapos sa pag-aaral.' Siya na mismo ang nag-enroll sa sarili niya... hindi siya uma-absent at talagang nagpupursige."* **English translation:** My child told me she wants to enter Senior High School and finish her studies. She enrolled by herself, rarely misses classes, and is truly determined.

This convergence of student and parent narratives illustrates how ALTAS revived educational aspirations, aligning with the quantitative finding that learners were strongly motivated to continue their studies. Learners also emphasized how improved academic skills led to greater confidence and persistence:

Student 9: *"Mas naging malinaw at mas madali ko nang naiintindihan ang mga lessons ko ngayong nasa SHS na ako... Mas ginanahan akong magpatuloy sa pag-aaral."* **English translation:** Lessons became clearer and easier to understand especially in my SHS now, which encouraged me to continue studying.

This observation was echoed by a parent:

Parent 4: *"Mas mabilis na niyang naiintindihan ang lessons at mas nag-improve ang performance niya sa school... mas eager na siyang matuto."* **English translation:** My child understands lessons faster now and has improved academically. She is more eager to learn.

Such narratives confirm that clarity of instruction and structured support directly contributed to learners' engagement and academic perseverance. Finally, the inclusive and supportive environment of ALTAS emerged as a powerful source of empowerment:

Student 7: *"Makita ang ibang classmates ko na mas matanda sa akin... walang edad kung gusto mong makapagtapos ng pag-aaral."* **English translation:** Seeing older classmates made me realize that there is no age limit if you truly want to finish your studies.

An adviser reinforced this observation:

Adviser 2: *"Mas nahihikayat silang lumahok sa mga talakayan at nalilinig ang kanilang tiwala sa sarili."* **English translation:** Learners are more encouraged to participate in discussions and their self-confidence is developed.

The students' narratives, supported by parents' and advisers' testimonies, provide compelling qualitative evidence that Project ALTAS fostered educational empowerment by restoring confidence, strengthening foundational skills, and reigniting hope for lifelong

learning. These narratives strongly corroborate the quantitative findings that identified ALTAS as *Highly Empowering towards Education Commitment*, confirming that its impact is both measurable and deeply lived.

Summary Table: Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings on Educational Empowerment

Quantitative Result	Supporting Student Narratives	Validation from Advisers and Parents
High motivation to continue studies (Mean = 3.88)	<i>"Napagtanto ko na hindi pa huli para abutin ang aking mga pangarap."</i> (Student 1)	Parents observed learners enrolling in SHS and showing persistence
Improved study habits and discipline (Mean = 3.83)	<i>"It taught me how to stay organized, keep track of my progress, and work toward specific goals."</i> (Student 4)	Advisers noted increased participation and task completion
Increased interest and love for learning (Mean = 3.84)	<i>"It also reduced my stress because I now feel more confident in my schoolwork and my ability to learn."</i> (Student 6)	Parents observed greater eagerness to attend classes
Clearer educational goals (Mean = 3.75)	<i>"Binigyan ako nito ng lakas ng loob na ipagpatuloy ko ang aking pag-aaral na gusto kong matapos."</i> (Student 10)	Parents confirmed learners' goal-setting and self-driven decisions
Readiness for higher education or training (Mean = 3.83)	<i>"I feel more motivated and confident to pursue further studies and explore new learning opportunities."</i> (Student 8)	Advisers observed improved confidence and academic readiness
Overall Educational Empowerment (Mean = 3.82 – Highly Empowering)	Learners rebuilt confidence, skills, and purpose	Stakeholders affirmed sustained academic and motivational growth

The findings of this study affirm that Project ALTAS significantly enhanced educational empowerment by strengthening not only learners' academic skills but also their confidence, sense of purpose, and belief in education as a viable pathway to a better future. This aligns with earlier research showing that ALS and related support systems reduce illiteracy and provide equivalent credentials that improve learners' chances for employment and further study (Espejon et al., 2024; Libo-On & Catunao, 2024). Moreover, the high levels of agreement on indicators such as motivation to continue studying, improved study habits, and belief in academic success resonate with findings that ALS learners—across diverse contexts including rural communities and correctional settings—experience increased self-confidence, motivation, and personal growth (Sala, 2024). While prior studies acknowledge that ALS programs generally promote educational empowerment

among marginalized out-of-school youth, they also emphasize the presence of structural and contextual challenges that may limit full impact (Jimenez et al., 2026). In this regard, the present results suggest that Project ALTAS effectively addressed some of these challenges through structured academic support, extended learning opportunities, and collaborative implementation, thereby amplifying the empowering effects typically associated with ALS. Collectively, the findings position Project ALTAS as a complementary intervention that strengthens the core goals of ALS by fostering sustained learner engagement, educational persistence, and a renewed commitment to lifelong learning.

Table 4. Perceived Effect of Project ALTAS on Life Transformation

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1 Project ALTAS helped improve my overall quality of life. (<i>Nakatulong ang Project ALTAS sa pagpapabuti ng aking pangkalahatang kalidad ng buhay</i>).	3.24	Agree
2 Because of ALTAS, I now feel more hopeful about my future. (<i>Dahil sa ALTAS, mas may pag-asa na ako sa aking kinabukasan</i>).	3.54	Strongly Agree
3 ALTAS helped me become more responsible in my personal life. (<i>Tinulungan ako ng ALTAS na maging mas responsable sa aking personal na buhay</i>).	3.56	Strongly Agree
4 I gained self-confidence because of my experience in Project ALTAS. (<i>Nagkaroon ako ng mas mataas na kumpiyansa sa sarili dahil sa aking karanasan sa Project ALTAS</i>).	3.53	Strongly Agree
5 Project ALTAS helped me develop a more positive outlook in life. (<i>Tinulungan ako ng Project ALTAS na magkaroon ng mas positibong pananaw sa buhay</i>).	3.58	Strongly Agree
6 Because of ALTAS, I am now more motivated to achieve my life goals. (<i>Dahil sa ALTAS, mas naging motibado ako na makamit ang aking mga layunin sa buhay</i>).	3.64	Strongly Agree
7 ALTAS helped me improve my decision-making skills in life. (<i>Nakatulong ang ALTAS sa pagpapahusay ng aking kakayahang magpasya sa buhay</i>).	3.47	Strongly Agree
8 Through Project ALTAS, I feel more prepared to face real-life challenges. (<i>Sa pamamagitan ng Project ALTAS, mas handa na akong harapin ang mga hamon sa tunay na buhay</i>).	3.31	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean and Perceived Effect	3.48	Highly Transformative to Life

Interpretation range: 2.51 – 3.25 = Agree and 3.26 – 4.00 Strongly Agree & Highly Transformative to Life

The findings reveal a strong positive impact of Project ALTAS on the life transformation of the completers. Most indicators obtained high mean scores ranging from 3.31 to 3.64, all interpreted as *Strongly Agree*, indicating that the participants perceived meaningful personal growth after joining the program. The highest mean (3.64) was recorded for increased motivation to achieve life goals, suggesting that ALTAS effectively inspired learners to pursue personal aspirations. Similarly, high ratings on responsibility (3.56), self-confidence (3.53), positive outlook in life (3.58), and improved decision-making skills (3.47) highlight the program's role in strengthening learners' character and mindset.

Although the indicator on improvement of overall quality of life obtained a slightly lower mean (3.24), it still falls within the *Agree* range, showing a favorable perception of the program's impact on daily living conditions. The overall mean of 3.48, interpreted as *Highly Transformative to Life*, confirms that Project ALTAS significantly contributed to the personal development and life perspective of its completers. These results suggest that ALTAS not only supports academic growth but also fosters holistic transformation, empowering learners to face real-life challenges with confidence and optimism.

Emergent Theme: Restored Hope, Direction, and Personal Agency: Reframing Life Goals

The narratives of ALTAS completers reveal that life transformation was primarily experienced as a restoration of hope, clarity of life direction, and a renewed sense of personal agency. Many students described how Project ALTAS helped them regain confidence in themselves, redefine their life goals, and believe that change and progress were still possible despite past setbacks. One student explicitly expressed how ALTAS clarified dreams and strengthened self-belief:

Student 1: "*Dahil sa Project ALTAS, mas naging malinaw ang direksyon ng aking mga pangarap... Naniniwala na ako ngayon na kaya kong makamit ang aking mga layunin basta magsusumikap.*" **English translation:** Because of Project ALTAS, the direction of my dreams became clearer. I now believe that I can achieve my goals if I work hard.

This sense of renewed purpose was accompanied by improved discipline and confidence in daily life, as the same student added that the program helped them manage time better and feel more capable in both school and life. These narratives directly support the quantitative finding

that learners strongly agreed ALTAS increased motivation to achieve life goals and strengthened self-confidence. Similarly, students who previously felt lost or discouraged shared how ALTAS reshaped their outlook on life:

Student 3: *“Kala ko wala nang direksyon ang buhay ko... pero dahil sa ALS o ALTAS nagbago ang pananaw ko sa buhay.”* **English translation:** I thought my life no longer had direction, but because of ALS or ALTAS, my perspective on life changed.

This narrative illustrates how ALTAS functioned as a turning point, helping learners move from hopelessness to cautious optimism—consistent with the high quantitative ratings on positive outlook in life and motivation. Other learners emphasized how ALTAS empowered them to take responsibility for their future and daily decisions:

Student 6: *“The program inspired me to aim higher and plan a future where I can succeed and become a better version of myself.”* **English translation (contextual):** ALTAS inspired me to set higher goals and believe that I can improve myself and succeed.

This experience of empowerment extended beyond academic life and translated into improved time management, reduced stress, and better handling of responsibilities—further validating the survey results on improved decision-making skills and responsibility. The theme of “it is not too late” strongly resonated across narratives, especially among learners who had stopped schooling or had adult responsibilities:

Student 5: *“Nabago ng Project ALTAS ang aking pananaw na hindi pa ako nahuhuli...”* **English translation:** Project ALTAS changed my perspective that I am not yet left behind.

The students’ narratives are strongly reinforced by advisers’ and parents’ observations, confirming that life transformation was not only perceived internally but

also visible in behavior, attitude, and daily functioning. An ALS adviser affirmed the learners’ renewed motivation and future orientation:

Adviser 1: *“The program has inspired learners to develop new skills, build confidence, and explore different career or educational opportunities.”*

Another adviser highlighted ALTAS’ critical role in sustaining learners’ perseverance:

Adviser 2: *“Malaking bahagi ang Project ALTAS sa pagpapatuloy ng mga mag-aaral sa nakalipas na tatlong taon.”* **English translation:** Project ALTAS played a major role in helping learners continue their studies over the past three years.

Parents also observed concrete life changes at home and in their children’s outlook:

Parent 3: *“Mas naging responsableng ina siya... at makikita mong may pagpapahalaga na siya sa edukasyon.”* **English translation:** She became a more responsible mother and now clearly values education.

Parent 1: *“Mas positive ang pananaw niya sa buhay at mas determined na siyang maabot ang mga pangarap niya.”* **English translation:** Her outlook on life became more positive and she is more determined to reach her dreams.

These narratives demonstrate that Project ALTAS transformed learners’ lives by restoring hope, clarifying life goals, and strengthening their sense of control over their future. This qualitative theme powerfully substantiates the quantitative finding that ALTAS was *Highly Transformative to Life* (Overall Mean = 3.48). The convergence of student, adviser, and parent voices confirms that life transformation under ALTAS was holistic—affecting mindset, motivation, responsibility, and future orientation, and enabling learners to face real-life challenges with renewed confidence and optimism.

Summary Table: Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings on Life Transformation

Quantitative Result	Supporting Student Narratives (Verbatim Evidence)	Validation from Advisers and Parents
Increased motivation to achieve life goals (Mean = 3.64)	“Naniniwala na ako ngayon na kaya kong makamit ang aking mga layunin basta magsusumikap.”(Student 1)	Parents observed stronger determination and clearer future plans
More positive outlook in life (Mean = 3.58)	“Nagbago ang pananaw ko sa buhay na hindi pala habang buhay na nasa down.” (Student 3)	Parents reported improved positivity and optimism

Quantitative Result	Supporting Student Narratives (Verbatim Evidence)	Validation from Advisers and Parents
Improved responsibility and discipline (Mean = 3.56)	“Mas naging disiplinado at motivated ako araw-araw.” (Student 1)	Parents observed better behavior at home and school
Increased self-confidence (Mean = 3.53)	“The program helped me realize that I can achieve things that once seemed impossible.” (Student 4)	Advisers noted greater participation and self-expression
Better decision-making and life skills (Mean = 3.47)	“Mas naging maayos kong mapangasiwaan ang oras at mga gawain ko.” (Student 6)	Advisers highlighted improved independence and goal-setting
Improved quality of life (Mean = 3.24 – Agree)	“Guminhawa ang buhay ko kahit papaano.” (Student 3)	Parents observed healthier routines and improved well-being
Overall Life Transformation (Mean = 3.48 – Highly Transformative)	Learners described restored hope, direction, and personal agency	Stakeholders affirmed long-term life and mindset changes

The life transformation experienced by ALTAS completers is strongly supported by both quantitative and qualitative findings, wherein quantitative results measured the **extent** of transformation while qualitative narratives explained **how and why** Project ALTAS reshaped learners’ outlook, behavior, and future direction. This pattern aligns with studies showing that educational support programs, particularly those serving marginalized and underprivileged learners, build confidence, life skills, and motivation for lifelong learning, often resulting in transformative personal experiences (Simac et al., 2029; Covaciu, 2025).

Consistent with this, research on the Alternative Learning System and other non-formal education programs demonstrates that participation is frequently associated with significant positive life changes, including improved educational trajectories, enhanced employability, stronger

identity formation, and greater social inclusion (Jimenez et al., 2026). The present findings further echo earlier work by Robinos et al. (2020), which emphasized that programs enhancing access to education for underprivileged individuals transform lives by restoring hope, clarifying life goals, and strengthening learners’ sense of control over their future. Moreover, transition studies documenting the movement of ALS learners to Senior High School highlight themes of renewed confidence, emerging voice, and strengthened identity and purpose (Fernandez, 2025). Collectively, these studies reinforce the conclusion that Project ALTAS functioned not merely as an academic intervention but as a **transformative life experience**, enabling learners to reframe their self-concept, assume greater agency, and envision more hopeful and purposeful futures.

Perceived Overall Impact of Project ALTAS

Table 5. ALTAS Project Evaluations

Batch	Objectives Realization	Time & Schedule	Proponents	Teacher Facilitators	Student Volunteers	Relevance	Program as a Whole
2023	4.69	4.67	4.76	4.78	4.73	4.70	4.84
	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
2024	4.73	4.58	4.75	4.77	4.71	4.67	4.73
	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
2025	4.96	4.84	4.84	4.83	4.83	4.90	4.93
	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Overall mean	4.79 Excellent	4.70 Excellent	4.78 Excellent	4.79 Excellent	4.76 Excellent	4.76 Excellent	4.83 Excellent

The results indicate a consistently excellent evaluation of Project ALTAS across all batches (2023–2025), reflecting a very strong perceived overall impact of the program. All

dimensions—objectives realization, time and schedule, proponents, teacher facilitators, student volunteers, and relevance—obtained mean ratings ranging from 4.58 to

4.96, all interpreted as *Excellent*. Notably, the “Program as a Whole” received very high ratings in all batches, with the highest mean recorded in 2025 (4.93), suggesting continuous improvement and stronger implementation over time.

The overall mean rating of 4.83 (Excellent) reinforces the finding that Project ALTAS was not only well-executed but also highly relevant and impactful to its beneficiaries.

These consistently high evaluations align with the earlier findings on educational empowerment and life transformation, indicating that participants perceived ALTAS as a comprehensive, effective, and meaningful intervention. Collectively, the results affirm that the strong program design and collaborative implementation of ALTAS contributed significantly to its positive outcomes and sustained perceived impact.

Table 6. Perceived Overall Impact of Project ALTAS

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1 Overall, Project ALTAS had a positive impact on my education and life. (<i>Sa kabuuan, ang Project ALTAS ay may positibong epekto sa aking edukasyon at buhay</i>).	3.38	Strongly Agree
2 Project ALTAS helped me improve both my academic skills and personal life skills. (<i>Tinulungan ako ng Project ALTAS na mapaunlad ang aking kasanayang akademiko at personal na kasanayan sa buhay</i>).	3.31	Strongly Agree
3 Because of Project ALTAS, I am better prepared for my future studies, work, and life challenges. (<i>Dahil sa Project ALTAS, mas handa ako para sa aking mga susunod na pag-aaral, trabaho, at mga hamon sa buhay</i>).	3.35	Strongly Agree
4 My experience in Project ALTAS contributed significantly to my personal growth and life direction. (<i>Malaki ang naitulong ng aking karanasan sa Project ALTAS sa aking personal na pag-unlad at direksyon sa buhay</i>).	3.43	Strongly Agree
5 I would recommend Project ALTAS to other ALS learners because of its overall educational and life benefits. (<i>Irerekomenda ko ang Project ALTAS sa iba pang ALS learners dahil sa pangkalahatang benepisyo nito sa edukasyon at buhay</i>).	3.56	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean and Perceived Effect	3.41	Highly Impactful

Interpretation range: 2.51 – 3.25 = Agree and 3.26 – 4.00 Strongly Agree & Highly Impactful

The table indicates a very positive perceived overall impact of Project ALTAS on both the educational and life outcomes of its completers. All indicators obtained mean scores ranging from 3.31 to 3.56, interpreted as *Strongly Agree*, reflecting consistent affirmation from respondents that the program contributed meaningfully to their academic development, personal growth, and life readiness. The highest mean (3.56) for recommending ALTAS to other ALS learners further suggests strong satisfaction and confidence in the program’s benefits.

The overall mean of 3.41, interpreted as *Highly Impactful*, confirms that Project ALTAS is perceived as an effective and holistic intervention. These results underscore the program’s success in empowering learners educationally while also supporting their personal development and preparation for future studies, work, and life challenges.

Emergent Theme: A Program that Restores Hope and Purpose Across Learners and Families

The narratives of ALTAS completers reveal that the overall impact of Project ALTAS was experienced as a holistic transformation, extending beyond academics to improvements in confidence, direction, emotional well-being, and family stability. Students consistently described

ALTAS as a program that helped them feel more capable, prepared, and hopeful about the future—confirming the quantitative finding that the project was perceived as *Highly Impactful*. Several learners directly linked their improved quality of life to increased confidence, skills, and preparedness:

Student 1: “Yes, my quality-of-life nag improve po sya. I feel more confident, mas maraming alam, and more prepared for future opportunities. Alam kong ang mga natutunan ko ay useful not only in school but also in daily life.”
English translation: My quality of life improved because I became more confident, knowledgeable, and prepared for future opportunities, both in school and in daily life.

Other learners emphasized how ALTAS helped them develop structure, direction, and emotional balance:

Student 4: “It has given me structure, new skills, and a clearer sense of direction... Overall, it has had a meaningful positive impact on my well-being.” **English translation:** ALTAS gave me structure, skills, and direction,

which positively affected my overall well-being.

Even among learners who faced demanding life circumstances, ALTAS was perceived as a source of resilience and empowerment:

Student 5: “*Nagkaroon ako ng kumpiyansa sa buhay... heto ako ngayon nagpa-patuloy sa pag-aaral habang ako ay isang full-time mom at nagtatrabaho.*” **English translation:** I gained confidence in life, and now I am able to continue studying while being a full-time mother and working.

Some learners highlighted that the program’s impact extended to work and daily interactions:

Student 3: “*Nakatulong po siya sa araw-araw ko na trabaho dahil iba’t ibang lahi po ang nakakasalamuha ko.*” **English translation:** The program helped me in my daily work, especially in dealing with people from different backgrounds.

Across narratives, learners described ALTAS as a turning point that reshaped their outlook, decision-making, and sense of purpose:

Student 11: “*Maraming nabago—pananaw ko sa buhay, kung paano ako magdesisyon at mag-response sa mga bagay-bagay.*” **English translation:** Many things changed—my outlook on life, how I make decisions, and how I respond to situations.

The students’ accounts are strongly validated by advisers and parents, who observed tangible improvements not only

in learners but also in their families’ sense of hope and stability. An adviser emphasized the program’s holistic influence:

Adviser 1: “*Project ALTAS has positively enhanced learners’ confidence, motivation, and sense of belonging, improving their overall well-being.*”

Another adviser highlighted ALTAS’ role in shaping long-term educational pathways:

Adviser 2: “*Malaking tulong ang Project ALTAS sa paghubog ng ALS learners... nagiging buo ang kanilang isip na magpatuloy sa SHS o kumuha ng vocational courses.*” **English translation:** ALTAS plays a major role in encouraging learners to continue to Senior High School or vocational training.

Parents likewise shared how ALTAS affected not just learners, but entire households:

Parent 1: “*Malaking tulong ito sa pamilya namin dahil nagbigay ito ng pag-asa at motivation.*” **English translation:** The program helped our family by giving us hope and motivation.

Parent 5: “*Seeing our child improve gives us confidence in their future... education can truly change lives.*”

These perspectives affirm that the overall impact of Project ALTAS extended beyond individual learners, contributing to family reassurance, reduced anxiety, and renewed belief in education as a pathway to a better life.

Summary Table: Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings on Overall Impact

Quantitative Indicator	Verbatim Student Evidence	Validation from Advisers / Parents
High overall program impact (Mean = 4.83 – Excellent)	“Overall, it has had a meaningful positive impact on my well-being.” (Student 4)	Advisers noted enhanced confidence and well-being
Improved quality of life (Mean = 3.31–3.56)	“Mas naging confident at motivated ako bilang isang learner.” (Student 9)	Parents reported improved family outlook
Readiness for future studies/work	“I feel more prepared for future opportunities.” (Student 1)	Advisers observed continuation to SHS/vocational paths
Strengthened confidence and motivation	“Binigyan ako neto ng kompyansa na mas maging matatag.” (Student 7)	Parents saw increased determination
Holistic life impact (Overall Mean = 3.41 – Highly Impactful)	“Tinuhungan kami ng programang ito para baguhin ang layunin namin sa buhay.” (Student 12)	Families expressed renewed hope and stability

The findings of this study affirm that Project ALTAS significantly enhanced educational empowerment by strengthening not only learners' academic skills but also their confidence, sense of purpose, and belief in education as a viable pathway to a better future. This aligns with earlier research showing that ALS and related support systems reduce illiteracy and provide equivalent credentials that improve learners' chances for employment and further study (Espejon et al., 2024; Libo-On & Catunao, 2024). Moreover, the high levels of agreement on indicators such as motivation to continue studying, improved study habits, and belief in academic success resonate with findings that ALS learners—across diverse contexts including rural communities and correctional settings—experience increased self-confidence, motivation, and personal growth (Sala, 2024).

While prior studies acknowledge that ALS programs generally promote educational empowerment among marginalized out-of-school youth, they also emphasize the presence of structural and contextual challenges that may limit full impact (Jimenez et al., 2026). In this regard, the present results suggest that Project ALTAS effectively addressed some of these challenges through structured academic support, extended learning opportunities, and collaborative implementation, thereby amplifying the empowering effects typically associated with ALS. Collectively, the findings position Project ALTAS as a complementary intervention that strengthens the core goals of ALS by fostering sustained learner engagement, educational persistence, and a renewed commitment to lifelong learning.

The Future Direction and Enhancement of Project ALTAS

Based on the strong quantitative evidence and the rich qualitative narratives gathered in this study, it is recommended that Project ALTAS be formally institutionalized and renamed as the *Capacity ALTAS Program* to reflect its broader and more sustainable role in developing learners' academic and life capacities. The consistently high ratings on educational empowerment, life transformation, and overall impact indicate that the initiative has moved beyond a short-term intervention and is now ready to function as a long-term program anchored in the university's community extension and academic support framework.

To further strengthen the Capacity ALTAS Program, there is a need to enhance its holistic capacity-building components, particularly in the areas of life skills development, goal setting, well-being, and career readiness. The results showed that learners not only improved academically but also gained confidence, discipline, and clearer life direction. Integrating structured modules that

address these dimensions will ensure that the program continues to respond to the real-life contexts and needs of ALS learners.

Considering that many ALTAS completers are working students, parents, or adult learners, the program should adopt more flexible and learner-centered delivery modes. Offering blended, modular, or schedule-sensitive learning sessions will allow participants to balance education with work and family responsibilities while sustaining engagement and completion. This recommendation directly responds to the learners' narratives on time management and life demands.

The findings also highlight the importance of strong collaboration among the public school, the private university, advisers, faculty, and families. Thus, the Capacity ALTAS Program should further strengthen school–university–community partnerships through clearly defined mentoring roles, sustained MOA-based commitments, and active parental involvement. Such collaboration was shown to be a key factor in learners' persistence and success.

Finally, to maintain its data-driven orientation, the Capacity ALTAS Program should establish a continuous monitoring and evaluation system. Regular collection of quantitative indicators and qualitative feedback will allow the program to track learner progress, assess long-term outcomes, and make timely, evidence-based adjustments. This will ensure that the program remains responsive, effective, and aligned with its goal of sustained educational and life empowerment.

Conclusions

The ALTAS Project has demonstrated a meaningful and sustained impact on the educational empowerment, life transformation, and overall development of ALS learners. The convergence of quantitative findings and qualitative narratives confirms that the project effectively addressed learners' academic needs while also restoring confidence, strengthening life skills, and providing clearer direction for future aspirations. The consistently positive perceptions shared by learners, advisers, and parents indicate that ALTAS functioned not merely as an academic support initiative but as a transformative, context-responsive intervention grounded in collaboration and learner-centered practice. With the proposed recommendations, the ALTAS Project is well-positioned to transition into the Capacity ALTAS Program, ensuring the continued implementation, enhancement, and long-term sustainability of its positive outcomes as a data-driven and impactful educational program.

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