

ABS-CBN Foundation International and the Project

ABS-CBN Foundation International is a 501 c3 entity registered in California, with Federal Tax ID No. 94-3292281. It supports projects in the Philippines and the diaspora, focusing s on the future of the Filipino child and its heritage.

In the Philippines, the Foundation focuses on child welfare, education, environmental protection, and disaster assistance. Education, called Programa Genio, collaborates with the Department of Education of the Philippines at the ground level and prioritizes support of senior high public and farm school students for graduation, certification of out of school youth and adults in its Alternative Learning Systems (ALS), teacher technology upskills training and the provision of equipment to support the 3 prongs of the program.

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) project is conducted where the students are — in the marketplace in Tagum (Palengkeskwela -market school), in fish pens (Bangkarunungan - knowledge in a boat), in jails, in jails, and via the internet for overseas workers. This program provides functional literacy (the ability to read, write and count), life skills training such as tailoring, and values formation.

The Foundation has focused its ALS program collaboration with the Bureau of Corrections in two (2) nationally dreaded prisons – Iwahig Penal Colony (pop. 4000) in Palawan and the Davao Prison and Penal Farm (pop 4500) in Carmen, Davao del Norte. In 2025, Iwahig ALS had close to 1000 graduates while Davao graduated 98 students out of 800 interested inmates.

Tailoring or sewing is one of the life skills taught in ALS Davao. Trainees in the program obtain orders for t-shirts, sports uniforms, and special occasion attires from the various government agencies in Davao. The trainees wait for their turn on the 4 sewing machines available for the project. With Davao's minimum wage pegged at PhP540 per 8 hour-day, a trainee can earn PhP 1740 from sewing 8 T-shirts or working 3 days a month to cover the average monthly food, rent and other household expenses of a family of 4.

Orders from private and public sectors pour into the Davao jail management. However, the limitation of sewing machines forces it to decline many orders, to the detriment of the trainees' economic interest and future welfare. Thus, the need for more sewing machines. A small item with big implications for the future of the family in economic stability and decreased recidivism of the prison ward, which are a win for the community.