

PRESS RELEASE

Arroyo receives Don Quixote award for Spanish language education

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo received from King Juan Carlos of Spain on April 15, 2010 the prestigious 2009 Don Quixote de la Mancha award at the Zarazuela Palace in Madrid for promoting Spanish language and culture in the country through education.

“We congratulate President Arroyo for receiving such recognition,” said Education Secretary Mona Valisno. “We are proud to be part of the effort in spreading deeper understanding of the Spanish culture and its impact on our own through the study of its language.”

The pilot phase was only started in June 2009 after the signing of Memorandum Order No. 276 by PGMA in 2007. A total of 35 teachers were trained and some 1,000 students benefited from the first of the program. The expansion phase, on the other hand, will cover 50 more schools, 100 teachers, and an estimated 8,000 students per school year from 2010 to 2011, and 2011 to 2012.

In one pilot school, Dolores National High School in Sta. Cruz, Marinduque, 60 third year high school students already completed the first year of their language training. They will proceed with the second part next school year while incoming third year students will begin their Spanish lessons by that time.

Dolores NHS was chosen for the pilot implementation of the special program in Spanish language for being top performer in English during the 2009 National Achievement Test for 2nd year high school students.

“This will give our high school graduates a competitive edge in the global arena,” explains Valisno.

According to DepEd, globalization has prompted countries to level up their competitive edge in job opportunities by making its citizens learn some of the world’s most widely-used languages such as Spanish. Some 21 Spanish-speaking countries with economic activities worth US \$4 trillion await the services of the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sectors which demand call center agents that speak Spanish.

The signing recently of a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Education and Spain’s Ministry of Education, Cervantes Institute, and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID) is expected to boost the chances of Filipinos landing a job in the BPO sector that will use Spanish as a medium. This is in accordance with the agreement to strengthen the reintroduction of Spanish language in public secondary schools.

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