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## Public school bags 6 awards in international virtual classroom contest

All six entries from Olongapo City National High School emerged winners in the recently concluded Classroom and Excellence Awards given out by the Singapore-based Asia Europe Foundation – an on-line website contest that confirmed the world-class capabilities of public school students.

The awards were given to outstanding on-line learning platforms or virtual classrooms where lessons and activities can be discussed by participating member-countries.

Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary Jesli Lapus lauded Olongapo City National High School and its principal, Dr. Helen Aggabao, for the three entries recognized under the Classroom Awards and another three under the Excellence awards.

“This confirms that public schools can be competitive in the global arena, and that we are starting to reap the benefits of our efforts to integrate technology in teaching and learning,” said Lapus.

According to Aggabao, the winning projects were implemented in each participating country and lessons and activities were discussed through the net.

The Asia-Europe Classroom Awards gives recognition to efforts that promote high school learning between Asia and Europe. It connects secondary schools from all over Asia and Europe and provides opportunities for collaborative learning and cultural exchange.

These projects are part of the Asia-Europe’s Classroom Network (AEC-NET) which is an educational component of the foundation.

Olongapo NHS’ website entries that won under the Classroom Awards were: “Culture Kaleidoscope 2007,” “Mastering Media – The Sequel,” and “Young Diplomats.”

Meanwhile, its “Asia and Europe Money,” “Local Traditions and Ceremonies – Forms of Theatre,” and “The World in a Book 2006” were given the Excellence Awards.

These websites serve as virtual classrooms where students from participating countries interact with each other and learn more about Asian and European cultures.

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Among the participating countries that were also given awards were Greece, Malaysia, Ireland, Slovenia, and Vietnam.

Olongapo National High School has been an active member of AEC-NET and in partnership with various secondary schools in Asia and Europe. The school currently has an ongoing virtual project with Malaysia, Indonesia, and Poland conceptualized by Aggabao.

This project promotes face-to-face exchanges and on-line projects among school participants. According to Aggabao, "this project serves as the school's major technological initiative that will put public schools in the virtual world map."

Lapus supports this initiative that endows Filipino students with a global perspective. "Information technology enables our students and teachers to keep apace with the latest trends in learning and interacting with other learners," Lapus added.

On December 12 to 16, 2008, Aggabao will represent Olongapo NHS in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia and present the project she conceptualized for AEC-NET participating schools.

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