

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Teacher braves flood for training to end child labor

For teacher Erlyn Esturas, the force of nature gone awry can't stop here from attending a seminar that will have far-reaching effect on the lives of child laborers.

Esturas is an elementary school teacher from Camarines Norte enlisted to attend a teacher training on how to combat child exploitation spearheaded by the World Vision Development Foundation (WVDF) and the Department of Education (DepEd) in Cebu. At that time, her place was flooded due to incessant rains that breached river banks and damaged water pipelines.

"This is a once in a lifetime training that I did not want to miss," Esturas pointed out. She was among the 40 teachers who comprised the first batch. Their training is expected to benefit some 30,000 child laborers.

The training series will develop among the teachers a deeper understanding of the child labor issue and the importance of education as intervention. It is part of the ABK2 Initiative or Pag-aaral ng mga Bata Para sa Kinabukasan. Its project associates include Christian Children's Fund (CCF) and Education Research Development Assistance Foundation (ERDA).

Esturas is no stranger to traversing mountains and rivers in their small town, after years of teaching in far-flung Capalonga Central Elementary School. But that fateful day, Esturas had to go through chest-deep floods, swollen rivers and muddy hills just to reach the bus terminal in Daet City. To make matters worse, her bags were soaked as she was. Determined to make it to Manila in time for her flight to Cebu, she contacted a relative within the city and borrowed clothes and personal items.

Despite the hardship that she went through en route to the training seminar, Esturas was still all smiles upon arriving at Ecotech, a DepEd facility in Cebu, where the training is held. Her efforts did not go unnoticed as she received accolade from her colleagues and the training staff. Esturas was given a special citation for her willpower. "No regrets... I'm looking forward to completing the training series," said Esturas.

Aside from her, six more teacher participants were honored by the ABK 2 Initiative for their years of service and dedication in the education sector. They were Bernadette Barrios from Estancia Central Elementary School in Iloilo (35 years of service), Lourdes Saculsan from the Division Office of Camarines Norte (35 years), Charity Nochefranca from Labi-labi National High School in Negros Occidental (34 years), Angelita Beltran of Gen. Vicente Lim Elementary School in Manila (34 years), Yolanda Villanueva from Dr. Antonio High School in

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Negros Occidental (28 years), and Elizabeth Penaverde of Antonio J. Villegas Vocational High School in Manila (27 years).

ABK 2 Initiative recognizes the crucial role teachers play in the continuous battle against child labor. ABK 2 Project Director Daphne Culanag explained that the five-module Teachers' Training Series will enhance the teachers' competency in five aspects of social development: research, advocacy and networking, direct service, documentation, and training facilitation.

Aside from understanding further the issue on child labor, the training series also "strives to inspire teachers in appreciating their role in the elimination of child labor through education," Culanag added.

The training series, entitled "Building Teachers' Competency in Social Development to fight Child Labor", is one of the many endeavors by the ABK 2 Initiative in partnership with the Department of Education.

ABK 2 is a project funded by the United States Department of Labor, which aims to contribute to the sustainable reduction of exploitive child labor in the Philippines.

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For inquiries, please contact ABK 2 Communication Specialist Pima Arizala at 0917-8619466 or email her at prima_arizala@wvi.org.

Photo attached:

Teachers and field staff from Camarines Norte in an ABK2 Workshop (Esturas, extreme right)

