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WINNERS' FOLIO:

**Outstanding Teachers from DepED Region XII Schools
Assisted by the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA)
under the EQuALLS2 Project**



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Contents

Background 4

Insights Gained and Lessons Learned 6

**Meet the Outstanding Teachers from DepED Region XII Schools
Assisted by ELSA under EQuALLS2** 8

English 8

Jainal Abidin Ismael
Dominador Baron Rebugio, Jr.
Cynthia Gaspar
Jean Pepugal
Leny Simora
Marivel Papna
Edna Pondong

Science 22

Edna Santander
Annalie Laidia
Melody Salamanca
Flora Mae Baylaran
Mary Jane Rafael
Napiza Uzman
Melinda Lee

Math 36

Araceli Robles
Bridget Nemeno
Liza Baron
Ofelia Chiva
Evelyn Jacinto
Genny Rabago
Lea Loro

**Meet the Partners of the EQuALLS2
Educators' Professional Development Program** 50

Annexes 53

Background

The Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills Phase 2 (EQuALLS2) is a Mindanao-focused education project of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in partnership with the Philippine Department of Education (DepED). The project aims to help increase access to quality education for elementary schools and relevant learning/livelihood skills training for out-of-school children and youth. EQuALLS2 is managed by the Education Development Center (EDC) in partnership with implementing organizations and groups, including the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA).

ELSA is a multi-stakeholder, and multi-sectoral public-private partnership composed of Ayala Foundation (AFI), Consuelo Foundation, Petron Foundation, Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), and International Youth Foundation (IYF) which is the Lead Partner of the alliance. As an implementing partner of EQuALLS2, ELSA works in eight provinces – Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, Hadji Muhtamad, Sarangani, Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato, Cotabato City and Cotabato Province.

One of the major project components of EQuALLS2 is **Strengthening Capacity for Teaching English, Math and Science** which is designed to support the Educator Professional Development Program of the Department of Education through the following interventions: core training programs in English, science and math which are designed to develop a pool of learning facilitators at the school and district levels; refresher courses meant to supplement the core training programs; and Training ++ which helps ensure that no teachers in the project sites are left behind. The priority target beneficiaries of Training ++ are teachers who may not be reached through mentoring.

The culminating activity of the Educator Professional Development Program of ELSA was the search for outstanding learning facilitators/mentors in its projects sites in Region XII. Its objective was to give due recognition to EQuALLS2 teachers who utilize innovative teaching strategies in their classrooms, based on their learnings from the project, as well as share these learnings with their learning partners/mentees and their other co-teachers.

The search was a joint undertaking of the DepED Region XII and ELSA, through the International Youth Foundation, Petron Foundation, and Notre Dame of Marbel University. Planning work started in the last Quarter of 2010 and the recognition day was held last March 28, 2011.





The following activities were undertaken:

The five ELSA-assisted schools divisions selected their most outstanding teachers in English, Science and Math last December 2010. DepED Region XII developed a set of selection criteria and chose a division winner in each of the 3 subject areas – English, science and math (ESM).¹ In sum, there were 21 division awardees in the 5 ELSA schools divisions.

Two ELSA partners – IYF and NDMU reviewed the various EQuALLS2 training designs in order to determine the scope of validation to be conducted on the division winners. The major objective of the validation was to confirm/assess whether the division awardees utilized innovative teaching strategies learned from EQuALLS2 training programs in their classrooms and whether they shared their learnings with their learning partners/mentees and other co-teachers.

NDMU developed 5 validation tools:² information sheet of division awardees, interview guide for division awardees, interview guide for school head, rubric for classroom observation/reflection notes of validators, video documentation of the interviews with awardees, the school head, PTCAs and other education stakeholders. NDMU also took charge of writing official letters to the school heads and learning

facilitators; preparing the schedule of field validation, and; selection of field validators from NDMU. Orientation sessions/briefings with the validators was done in January 2011.

IYF and NDMU requested the DepED XII regional office to allow the project to visit the division awardees and conduct validation work on the 21 division awardees. When the Regional Director learned about the search, she requested EQuALLS2 to schedule the awarding during the opening of the Mindanao Educators Congress on March 28, 2011.

Validation work on the 21 division awardees was done from 25 January to 5 February 2011. Video documentation included not only the interviews with the division winners but also with the school heads and other project stakeholders (PTAs, community leaders and other stakeholders). Folios of the 21 division awardees were prepared, to serve as basis for the final selection of three grand awardees in each of the subject areas of English, science and math (ESM).

IYF and NDMU invited ESM specialists to evaluate the 21 folios, interview the division awardees, review the reflection notes of the validators, and select the 9 grand awardees in ESM. The recognition of the 21 awardees and the 9 grand awardees was done on March 28, 2011.

¹ Please see Annex I

² Please see Annexes 2a-e

Insights Gained and Lessons Learned

In profiling the awardees in the ELSA search for outstanding teachers in its project sites, a number of factors emerged as having positively contributed to the making of a winner in the Educator Professional Development Program of EQuALLS2. They may be categorized into two: extrinsic and intrinsic factors.

Extrinsic Factors

All-out Support of the School-head. The 21 EQuALLS2 winners are fully supported and are given technical advice by their school heads. Having been oriented on the Learning Partnership Program (LPP) themselves, the school heads provide leadership by encouraging the rest of the school faculty to participate in the program. Further, since they have also been provided training on classroom instructional practices, content areas and strategies of teaching English, science and math, these school heads are able to continuously monitor the classroom activities of the outstanding learning facilitators-mentors as well as the sharings and group learnings in LPP sessions.

Acceptance and Collaboration of the Learning Partners/Mentees. Although there were initial worries on whether the LPP would be accepted by the learning partners/mentees, the EQuALLS2 winners have noted either immediate or gradual interest among the rest of the school faculty to join the LPP sessions. This acceptance is generally attributed to quality demo teaching done by the learning facilitators/mentors during the LPP sessions and the readiness of these learning facilitators to help their learning partners in their day-to-day classroom activities.

Partnership with Respected Educational Institutions. ELSA's partnership with Notre Dame of Marbel University (NDMU) in the implementation of the Educator Professional Development Program is a contributory factor in motivating the EQuALLS 2 winners to do their best in their participation in the training programs and in the LPP. NDMU is a leading institution of higher learning in Central Mindanao and the EQuALLS 2 winners felt proud to attend NDMU-managed EQuALLS 2 training programs. Being associated with NDMU was a major reason they cited for their perfect attendance in the EQuALLS 2 training programs.

Support of Community Stakeholders. Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), local government units (LGUs), school governing councils (LGCs), community business and other community groups in the schools of the EQuALLS2 winners show substantial interest in EQuALLS2 activities. They help source funds for acquiring the learning materials needed by the school and also provide in-kind contributions to implement these activities.

Enabling Policy Directions. At the beginning of School Year 2010-2011, the Department of Education Region XII issued Regional Memo 86 s. 2010 entitled *Strengthening the Learning Partnership Program (LPP) Cum Mentoring in the Region*. This issuance provided impetus to the wide scale implementation of the LPP in Region XII. The EQuALLS2 schools, having been thoroughly oriented on the program for about three years, emerged as natural frontline leaders at the school, district and division levels. They readily implemented the LPP activities with ease and without major setbacks.

Support from Home. Family support is evident in the activities of the ELSA winners – from allowing them to be away from home during the training sessions to showing sympathy for their long hours of mentoring. This family support is an important consideration especially for the married learning facilitators.

Intrinsic Factors

Concern for the Pupils. The EQuALLS2 winners feel considerable fulfillment when they observe that their students are able to understand the concepts taught in the classroom. Their fulfillment is multiplied several times over when they see the students gain not only a good understanding of the subject matter but also when they imbibe positive values such as learning to work together, sharing of learning materials and having fun while learning. The EQuALLS2 winners, in turn, are more inspired to do better in their work because they see improvements in the school performance of for their students.

Nurturing Attitude, Sincerity to Help. To the EQuALLS 2 winners, teaching is a task which has a seamless coverage, from school to non-school dimensions. They provide a nurturing environment to their learners, which they find as a positive anchor of high student interest in learning.

Ability to Effect Transfer of Learning. The EQuALLS 2 winners show exemplary ability to

teach their students by utilizing student-centered strategies. Equally important, they do not simply depend on prototype learning materials. They make the necessary adaptation to suit them to the context of the learners and to make them more culturally sensitive. They are able to apply the learning strategies they learned using their own devices and readily available resources.

Initiatives to Innovate. The profiles of the EQuALLS2 winners show that they use varied springboards in handling their classes as well as in their sharings during LPP sessions. In the classroom, they choose what they truly perceive can create better results, based on their assessments of where students are, and they take off from these student circumstances and contexts. They share these approaches and strategies with their learning partners with enthusiasm and vigor.

Moreover, in the day-to-day classroom activities of the EQuALLS2 winners, there are evidences showing that the learnings they gained from the Educator Professional Development Program go beyond the ESM boundaries. They have applied their learnings outside of the English, science and math classes – in related curricular activities, in enrichment programs and even in community development initiatives.

With these emerging positive profiles, the ultimate beneficiaries are indeed the young learners of Mindanao.



1

Jainal Abidin Ismael

- 2010 Outstanding Teacher in English, Schools Division of Cotabato City
- 2011 Grand Awardee in English in the Search for Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teachers in the Project Schools of the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA)

When he passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET), Jainal Abidin Ismael had a chance to choose from several schools of Cotabato City where he would be assigned. He chose the J. Marquez School of Peace (JMSP). This school was established in 1997 as part of the support of the Department of Education Region 12 to the 1996 Peace Agreement between Muslim freedom fighters and the Republic of the Philippines. Specifically, the JMSP is the education sector's response to provide learning opportunities to children of ex-rebels who have decided to live as ordinary civilians after years of fighting, as well as to families of war-affected areas especially the school-age children. A big majority of the student population (99.7%) are children of these ex-rebel returnees.

A young man with earnest dark eyes, Jainal felt he could be of help to the efforts of the Department of Education to provide quality education to the Muslim youth. More especially, he wanted to help Muslim students who did not quite see the value of the English language and attended the subject only because they had to finish basic schooling. When he started teaching at JMSP six years ago, he noted that his students were either non-readers or had considerable difficulty in reading. Hence, he scheduled his English class activities with more time allotted to reading. He feels that efficient time-management of lesson activities should provide ample time for students to internalize information and to apply learning in meaningful contexts.

When he was selected by EQuALLS2 to be a mentor and undergo a series of training programs in English, he took special attention not only to the content learning strands but also to the development and preparation of audio-visual materials. The EQuALLS2 core programs, including



“Most teachers rush learning. Students need time to think and use their minds. It takes time for information to become meaningful. There is no true learning unless the child mentally acts upon the information.”

mentoring , refresher courses and most especially the Training++ afforded him the opportunity to focus on developing indigenous, low-cost but colorful and attention-getting learning materials. He regularly used these materials in his classroom, together with the strategies he learned on developing reading readiness. He gradually noticed the growing interest of his students in the class activities, particularly during class recitations and actual reading time.

His confidence boosted, he shared these strategies with his co-teachers and learning partners (mentees) during group mentoring and one-on-one sessions with them. Scheduling the Learning Partnership Program (LPP) sessions did not pose a problem for Jainal. In schools where majority of the students are Muslims, Fridays from 10 am to 1pm are prayer hours. While majority of the students in his school are Muslims, most of his co-teachers are Christians. He proposed to his school head that LPP sessions be held during this “free” time, and the latter readily agreed, noting that the school would be able to comply with a DepED Region 12’s memo to allot two to three hours once a month for school-based in-service training of teachers. With this bright idea, the school went beyond the time allotment. Thus, he and his learning partners were able to hold learning sessions every week.



During the first few weeks of holding in-school LPP sessions, Jainal was worried that his being a Muslim and his learning partners being Christians, might pose a challenge. But these teachers showed interest to learn from his sharing, especially on the strategies in teaching least learned competencies in English. Having demonstrated that student learning could be more fun and meaningful with the use of appropriate and interesting audio-visual materials, Jainal earned the respect of his co-teachers. Even the more senior faculty members sought his assistance during the LPP sessions and also whenever they had queries about content points and teaching techniques.

Jainal has been able to put to good use his acquired knowledge and skills from EQuALLS2 not only in his classroom and in the school’s LPP sessions but also in creating enrichment activities outside the classroom. Under his guidance, the school paper *Kalilintad* won 12th place as best school paper in Region 12 and 14th place under the Feature and Literary Page category. This award qualified the school to participate in the national press conference of the Department of Education.

Jainal was chosen as the ELSA outstanding English teacher of Cotabato City under the EQuALLS2 in 2010. In March 2011 he was selected as one of the three grand awardees in the 2011 search for outstanding EQuALLS2 English teachers in ELSA schools of DepED Region XII.



2

Dominador Baron Rebugio, Jr.

- 2010 Outstanding Teacher in English, Lambayong District, Sultan Kudarat
- 2011 Grand Awardee in English in the Search for Outstanding USAID/EQuALLS2 Teachers in the Project Schools of the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA)

Dominador Baron Rebugio, Jr., fondly called Toto by his family and friends, was a consistent Dean's Lister, major in Biology at the University of Southern Mindanao where he graduated in 2001. At first blush, he seemed like a round peg in a square hole. Asked why he, a Biology major, is teaching English, Toto explains that English is a major springboard for students to further understand science concepts. He has adopted the integrative method where science concepts are integrated in English speaking and reading exercises and he has noted that his students find it a meaningful approach to learning both English and science.



“Teachers do not need to travel to far places to look for strategies that would help their students learn meaningfully. All they need to do is to put their students in the center of the learning environment and reflect on their needs. I have a reflection journal where I describe the progress and areas for improvement of each of my students. This journal guides me on what learning strands and strategies to use in my classrooms.”

Keenly interested in honing his teaching skills and in sharing these skills with his co-teachers, Toto participated in all EQuALLS2 core and refresher courses in English as well as the mentoring programs from 2008-2010. In the district-based Training ++ of Lambayong, Toto served as the team leader in English, taking charge of developing the context-based training designs of the three cycles. His other responsibilities included: serving as trainor/facilitator, managing the preparatory work such as orienting trainors and other logistics, like preparation of learning materials, documentation, training evaluation, post training report preparation and selection of training venues.

Toto spearheaded a 2010 summer reading remediation program for non-readers and slow readers in Mamali Elementary School. The program was completed with flying colors. By the end of summer 2010, all the 30 participants could read and comprehend reading materials suitable to their respective grade levels.



Toto's classroom is full of attractive learning materials. The EQuALLS2-donated dictionaries and reference materials are in a strategic corner - now showing wear- and-tear signs because of frequent student use. There is also a board wall of new words to be used during the day. Toto also initiated the "English Wizard" program to recognize fast learners in speaking and reading. He notes that this scheme has motivated his students to be more engaged in his classroom activities. His "Today, I have learned..." is another strategy of his which keeps his students engaged until the end of the class, and they actively list their learnings in their lesson logs. This strategy also enables him to get feedback from his students on his teaching approach as well as to evaluate student performance on a daily basis.

A natural born leader and endowed with a pleasant personality, Toto took no time to earn his colleagues' trust and confidence as their English learning facilitator (mentor). Under his leadership, the English teachers in his school crafted a master plan for improving the school's English scores in the School Year 2010-2011 National Achievement Test (NAT). The plan called for Saturday review classes during the school year. This was not an easy task, as students usually help their parents in house work or business on weekends. Thus, Toto and his colleagues conducted PTA meetings to orient the parents on the value of these review sessions in improving their children's school performance. During these meetings, he would discuss with the parents the student learning needs contained in his reflection journal.

Equally important, the students themselves had to realize the importance of this undertaking in their over-all standing in school, thus helping secure their academic future.

The persistence of Toto and his team paid off. The school registered a 100% student participation in these review classes. The result of this initiative speaks for itself – the NAT results show that in 2011, Mamali Elementary School ranked 7th from 168th in the previous year. The school head and Toto's co-teachers are one in the opinion that his leadership mainly contributed to the creation of faculty teamwork, resulting in a cohesive and focused goal to improve student achievement.

Toto's school involvement goes beyond the confines of his classroom and his sharing of his EQuALLS2 learnings with his partners. He also participated in PTA training programs on resource mobilization, financial management and community leadership. These training programs serve him in good stead as adviser of the school PTA. He has also helped in mobilizing the business community to provide financial assistance to an audio visual project for Mamali Elementary School as well as a matching grant for training out-of-school youth not only in his community but for the whole Sultan Kudarat Province.

In 2010, Toto was chosen as the ELSA outstanding English teacher of Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat and in March 2011 he was selected as one of the three grand awardees in the 2011 search for outstanding EQuALLS2 English teachers in ELSA schools of DepED Region XII.

3

Cynthia Gaspar

- **2010 Outstanding Teacher in English, Tantaran District, South Cotabato**
- **2011 Grand Awardee in English in the Search for Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teachers in the Project Schools of the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA)**

With a 25-year teaching experience, Cynthia Gaspar could have opted to stay in her comfort zone— the four confines of her classroom in New Iloilo Elementary School in Tantaran, South Cotabato. After all, she already had a chance to teach almost all grades at the elementary level. She was quite familiar with the local situation in her community and was able to contextualize her teaching approaches in order to respond her students' learning needs.

But when she was chosen to participate in the EQuALLS2 Educators' Professional Development Program, she did not hesitate to be part of the project team to be trained and subsequently to be one of the learning facilitators of her school. A teacher's education is never done but this program meant she would spend many days away from home during the training sessions, and after the training, several hours of mentoring her co-teachers, in addition to her already full days of teaching and other extra-curricular work. No matter, Cynthia had a major purpose in joining the EQuALLS2 teacher development program. She wanted to enrich her knowledge in more up-to-the-minute teaching strategies in English, particularly on ICT-based instruction which she feels, is "able to make teaching more meaningful, with less work for the teachers."

While she was undergoing the training program, Cynthia already started to plan on how she would share her learnings with her co-teachers. She would convince them that while preparatory work entailed by these newer strategies is admittedly substantial, actual classroom work would be more efficient and easier to complement because the students would be more engaged in the learning-by-doing approach.



"I consider mentoring as a two-way process – while sharing my EQuALLS2 learnings with my co-teachers, I am in turn able to get insights from them on how to further enhance my teaching strategies and make my lessons more enjoyable to my students."

During the Training ++ sessions where she served as trainer/facilitator, she was able to give demo lessons on these strategies. Like other EQuALLS2 learning facilitators, Cynthia harboured some apprehensions in mentoring teachers belonging to different social and ethnic backgrounds. However, when these teachers attended her Training ++ sessions, they appreciated and eventually adopted the strategies she shared with them in her demonstration classes. Cynthia has received good feedback from her learning partners that their students are now more active in their classroom activities. The school head likewise happily notes that the teachers being mentored by Cynthia now work as a team in addressing least-learned competencies in English and in preparing audio-visual resources and other learning materials. This practice is cost-saving since the materials are widely shared by many other teachers.

Cynthia's classes are heterogeneous, a mix of fast and not-so-fast learners with different learning styles. To address this challenge, she divides her students into two groups – the fast learners are assigned to be “little” teachers to the not-so-fast learners. One fast learner is paired with one not-so-fast learner. Cynthia allots thirty minutes after class for the pairs to do some reading and writing work. Cynthia is happy to note that aside from more efficient learning, this approach has promoted closer relationships among her students. The “little” teachers give

Cynthia the highlights of the sessions and she uses the feedback and queries asked during the discussions as basis for remediation and for identifying learning gaps, as identified by the students themselves.

Still, Cynthia cites many challenges that need to be continually addressed—particularly the presence of many indigent students in her school. They go to school with empty stomachs, with headaches and other ailments. Every year, Cynthia brings this matter to the attention of the school head, who in turn does substantial mobilization work for the school feeding program. For her part, Cynthia continues to be a second mother to her students.

Endowed with a natural motherly mien, she strives to provide a nurturing learning environment where she may be approached any time by her students and fellow teachers alike. She tries to understand their learning concerns and counsels them, even if they are not school issues. She gives them advice on their family and other non-school problems. Because of this personal touch, she has earned the trust and confidence of the school community.

When she was named an outstanding English teacher in Tantaran under the EQuALLS2 in 2010, nobody among her peers and students was surprised. Neither were they surprised when she was chosen as one of the three grand awardees in the 2011 search for outstanding teachers in ELSA schools of DepED Region XII.



4

Jean Pepugal

- 2010 Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teacher in English, Pigkawayan District, Schools Division of Cotabato Province

As a classroom teacher, Jean Pepugal has taught English in almost all grade levels and in different schools of Cotabato Province for more than ten years. Yet, she conducts her classes with the same enthusiasm and vigor as when she was a young teacher, using many multi-colored learning materials and audio-visual aids. She thrives despite the even more colorful social and political milieu she lives in.

The Pigkawayan Central School where Jean teaches is located at the border of Cotabato and Maguindanao provinces. It is often caught in crossfires between Moro freedom fighters of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Independent Liberation Front (MILF) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. In spite of intermittent encounters between and/or among these forces, the school strives to maintain smooth interpersonal relationships among its Muslim and Christian students.

Like most teachers in this school, Jean dreams of achieving peace in the community through quality education — not merely through the use of conventional classroom strategies but also with newer techniques that are guaranteed to arouse the interest of learners of today who have varied learning styles and abilities brought about by technology gadgets which already abound in the community. Hence, when she was chosen to participate in the EQuALLS 2 Educators' Professional Development Program she diligently attended all the core and refresher courses. She actively participated in the implementation of the Training ++ in the school district of Pigkawayan. In these courses, she tried to equip herself with present-day teaching strategies focused on the use of ICT-based strategies such as the use of media-assisted instruction.

One of Jean's back-to-school tasks after completing the EQuALLS 2 training programs was community mobilization work in order to acquire instructional materials for her school. She was able to obtain financial assistance from local government executives as well as from the school's PTA. She has shared these materials with her learning partners during individual and group mentoring work. She has likewise initiated the use of computer-assisted instruction in her classes, a strategy which she also encouraged her co-teachers to utilize. She notes that they are gradually becoming more interested in this approach. They now recognize the importance of newer technologies in making



“Teaching is not just a profession to earn (from) but a vocation to live for.”

the learning environment attuned to needs of the learners of today who are exposed to various ICT gadgets and tools for learning.

In addition, Jean has shared with her learning partners many other approaches she learned from EQuALLS2, particularly the pupil-centered strategies in teaching English, such as: the KWL chart where the students share what they know (K) about the topic at hand, what they want (W) to know about it and finally what they learn (L) on the matter through the selection read. This strategy makes students more participative because their memories are refreshed on their past knowledge and are made to connect the old with the new. The Semantic Web allows them to classify concepts and the Venn Diagram is used to extract similarities and differences in two to four variables described in a write-up. She also uses concept maps to enrich her students' vocabulary, gallery walk where students view the output of their classmates and think-pair-share activity sheets where students share their ideas with their partners and with the whole class. She observes that "when I use these strategies ... my students become more participative and more interested in learning. I also note that their level of confidence has improved."

Her use of these strategies is encouraging. The 90-minute time allotment for English that her students previously perceived as quite long for one lesson is increasingly becoming shorter and insufficient for these interesting classroom strategies. The learning environment has become more vibrant, with students actively engaged in classroom work.

Concerned about the non-readers in her school, Jean and four of her co-teachers conducted a special reading program for non-readers during the School Year 2010-2011. After obtaining the permission of the parents of their target learners, they conducted reading sessions during non-school hours, using the following approaches: individual reading, peer reading and group reading, supplemented by the gallery walk technique. The fast learners in the reading sessions were asked to assist in tutoring their

classmates. The parents were also encouraged to ask their children to read books while at home.

Notable outcomes of the program include: students have become more active in class; the student/peer mentors have gained more confidence and leadership qualities; and the teachers have been encouraged to work as one in conducting school activities designed to enrich learning. For her part, Jean has done mentoring beyond the confines of her school. She conducts LPP sessions in neighboring schools. She admits that sustainability of the LPP is a challenge as there is a continuing need for interesting and attention-getting learning materials. She plans to continue mobilization work, as she notes that the community is now more willing to help because of the marked increase in her school's rating in the NAT. The community leaders also recognize the achievements of Jean's school in Read-a-thon competitions.

Jean's efforts did not go unnoticed – in 2010, the young, waif-like dynamo was chosen as the English awardee of Pigkawayan, Cotabato Province in the ELSA search for outstanding teachers under the EQuALLS2 Project.



5

Leny Simora

- **2010 Outstanding Teacher in English, Sto. Nino District, Schools Division of South Cotabato**



“I was hesitant to join the EQuALLS2 Educators’ Professional Development Program, particularly when I was asked by my school principal to attend the series of training programs that would prepare me to be an English learning facilitator at Guinsang-an Elementary School in Sto. Nino, South Cotabato,” Leny Simora admits to guests who observed her class recently. She adds that she is well aware of the fact that majority of her co-teachers are more senior than she is, and that many have higher educational qualifications. Further, she confessed apprehension about mentoring sessions that would either be frequently cancelled or rescheduled because of many unprogrammed school activities that needed teachers’ attention.

“I believe collaborative efforts and unified focus of the whole school, aided by new innovative and cost efficient initiatives, are the foundation of quality learning.”

Still, being a good soldier, Leny participated in all the EQuALLS2 training programs. Also, after assessing the teaching strategies she used in her classroom vis-à-vis the present-day characteristics of learners, she realized that she needed to get updated in her teaching strategies designed to make learning a more interesting experience for learners.

Oozing with more self-confidence than ever and equipped with her newly acquired competencies and skills, particularly on authentic assessment with the use of individual student portfolio, she was able to identify weak learners in her classes, together with their unique learning needs. She then developed a customized instructional strategy and conducted special remedial learning sessions for these weak learners. The strategy had positive outcomes. It has encouraged them to be more interested in learning, more creative and more appreciative of the value of participation in class work. They have displayed higher order thinking skills in their responses to questions posed to them, patience in accomplishing given tasks and working with various groups and individuals.

Noting the improved pupil performance specifically in terms of critical thinking and creativity in doing their work, Leny shared the strategy with her learning partners who likewise noted improvements in their students’ participation in classroom activities. The whole school community

attributes the very impressive NAT performance of the school to this learner-centered teaching strategy. The school ranked number one in the 2011 NAT in the whole Schools Division of South Cotabato.

To Leny, team work among the school management team and teachers, as well as engaging community involvement are important factors in the implementation of LPP. The teaching strategies she has learned from EQuALLS2 require considerable attention, time, effort and financial assistance. The school governing council (SGC) of the school, the parents and the whole community appreciate this LPP requisites. Thus, they have put in place a resource mobilization mechanism to assist these initiatives. They have a continuing fund generation campaign among community business groups, local government units and NGOs. Her being a Purok Enabler, a volunteer work she does for her municipality, helps her do her advocacies in improving the learning environment in her school. While she does community service, she is able to motivate local leaders and businessmen to help her school projects. For their part, these stakeholders feel good in helping the school because they note



that its number one rank in the NAT results should be maintained. They are very proud of this accomplishment. Hence, they support Leny's initiatives in conducting individual learning sessions among her students.

She believes that achievement of learning goals does not solely depend on classroom efficiency; that collaboration on shared goals should exist even beyond its four walls. Her belief echoes the message of the adage that "it takes a village to raise a child."

Leny was chosen as the ELSA outstanding English teacher of Sto. Nino, South Cotabato under the EQuALLS2 Project in 2010.



6

Marivel Papna

- 2010 Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teacher in English, Esperanza District, Sultan Kudarat



Like other teachers of Sultan Kudarat, Marivel Papna did hesitate to join the EQuALLS2 Educator Professional Development Program which envisioned to select a cadre of mentors that would undergo a series of training programs from 2008-2010. She knew at the onset that she would need to allot substantial time for the project in addition to her already heavy teaching load. Moreover, she was unsure of whether she would be accepted as English mentor by her co-teachers, many of whom are more senior than she is in the teaching profession. In spite of her initial apprehensions, Marivel decided to join the program because she wanted to help improve the performance of her school in national achievement tests.

“I continue to be inspired when I see my students go to the library after my class and look for books that dovetail with my lessons for the day. It means that they have been motivated to seek answers to some questions they may have, or to further understand what they learned in class.”

After completing the EQuALLS2 training programs and after a series of planning sessions with her school principal who also underwent orientation and training on LPP, the task of mentoring did not seem insurmountable nor heavy any more. Her learning partners accepted her as their English learning facilitator because they saw the good practices she shared with them during her demo sessions in the three cycles of Training++ in Sultan Kudarat. They showed interest in student-centered strategies that she used during these demo sessions.

Even while conducting LPP sessions, Marivel implemented a weekly 30-minute reading enhancement program in School Year 2010-2011. The improvement of the school in the 2011 NAT was attributed to this program – from rank 15 in the previous school year, the school ranked second in the NAT. Not content with this achievement, Marivel continues to conduct remedial teaching in reading among her slow readers and non-readers.

Marivel is tapped to serve as demonstration teacher at the Schools Division of Sultan Kudarat. She regularly holds sessions on beginning reading in division-level seminars of the National English

Proficiency Program (NEPP) of the Department of Education, using strategies and approaches she learned from EQuALLS2. Hence, she is able to share her learnings not only with her co-teachers in Sagasa Elementary School but also with other teachers in other schools throughout the municipality of Esperanza. Marivel is also the adviser of the English Club of her school where she gives technical assistance to all English-related school activities such as spelling contests, essay writing contests and other competitions. Marivel acknowledges the support of parents and the whole community in these activities. They help in financing the participation of her students in various projects designed to improve student performance in English.

For Marivel, there are three ingredients in a successful teaching process – collaborative, strategic and experimental.

Collaborative: She regularly encourages parents and the community to become major stakeholders in enriching the learning experiences of her students. She initiated a feeding program twice a week for School Year 2010-2011 where the community leaders and parents helped in preparing packed lunch for slow learners in remedial reading sessions during non-school hours. She also asked the

community leaders to assist in the renovation of the school library and to purchase library resources such as books, audio-visual aids and other learning materials. Today, when one visits the school library, he/she sees the good results of Marivel's initiative – students quite absorbed in reading the attractively packaged reference materials and tinkering with learning kits.

Strategic: One example of Marivel's strategic approach is in resource mobilization work. Aware that her community is a disadvantaged one, she has asked her students to help in cleaning the school surroundings and their homes by bringing to school discarded bottles which the school sells for recycling purposes. The proceeds are used for the purchase of learning materials of the school.

Experimental: Marivel sees to it that she contextualizes and applies her in-service learnings in her classroom. She is encouraged by the good results she sees – reduced tardiness and absenteeism, more active participation in classroom activities, and better school performance as evidenced in the 2011 NAT results.

In 2010, Marivel was chosen as the ELSA outstanding English teacher of Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat under the EQuALLS2 Project.



7

Edna Pondong

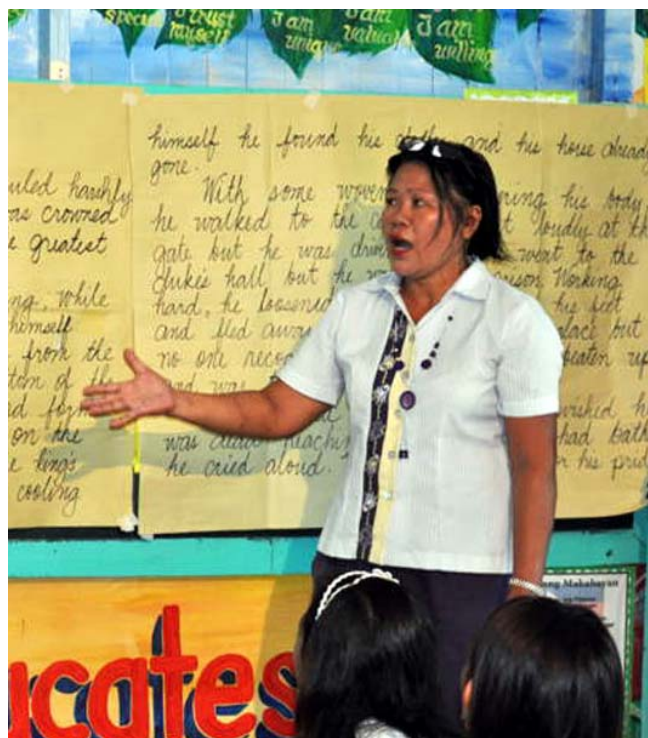
- 2010 Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teacher in English, Malapatan District, Schools Division of Sarangani

Edna Pondong has diverse interests in community development. In addition to her teaching work at the Malapatan Central Elementary School (MCES) she is a volunteer in the purok-based Bayanihan work on proper waste disposal, helps in cleaning the seashores of Sarangani Bay and joins relief services to victims of flood and other natural calamities.

Edna belongs to the B'laan tribe, many of whom are impoverished and have inadequate knowledge of the value of education. She realized at an early age that education has great significance toward the improvement of the quality of life of her tribe. Since she started teaching twenty-seven years ago, her passion for reaching out not only to the B'laan community but also to other cultural and religious groups, has not waned. Every year, she helps in house-to-house campaigns to encourage these groups to enrol their young children in Grade One in MCES. These campaigns have helped in the increase of enrolment of children belonging to tribal communities in MCES as well as in other Malapatan schools. Edna draws in strength from the fact that she is able to make students want to learn more.

Primarily utilizing the cooperative learning approach (CLA), a strategy she learned from the EQuALLS2 teacher training program, Edna's students show signs of being able to learn and work together. Like the other teachers who have undergone EQuALLS2 training programs, she has a board wall where students visit to learn new words and to use these words to communicate. Group work activities which she regularly conducts among her students enable them to share their ideas and do hands-on work during regular classes and homeroom sessions.

Edna also religiously implements DEAR (Drop Everything And Read), a daily student reading activity from 1:00-2:00 in the afternoon before her English class formally starts. Her classes also participate



“My students have diverse learning styles, particularly those who belong to indigenous groups. I try my best to tailor my teaching approaches to these different ways of absorbing the content of my lessons.”

in READATION – a reading comprehension competition. In the last school year, her students won first prize in this competition in Malapatan and they represented the district in the Division level competition. She is also the adviser of “NEWSPEN”, the school paper of Malapatan Central Elementary School. Her students won in the broadcasting category of the Division level in the 2009-2010 competition held in the annual press conference of the Department of Education. This award qualified her students to represent the Sarangani Division in the Regional School Press Conference. It boosted her students’ confidence in English speaking and writing, resulting in much improved school scores in English in the most recent NAT.

After completing the three EQuALLS2 English core programs, refresher courses and mentoring program, she was chosen to serve as trainer and demo teacher in the three Training++ cycles in Malapatan. Armed with the competencies and skills she gained from the program, Edna conducted several demo teaching sessions during these Training ++ sessions. When she started to do the mentoring work expected of her as a learning facilitator in her school, her learning partners accepted her to give them counseling and advice because she was able to gain their confidence during the demo sessions she conducted during the Training ++ sessions.

The school principal, after being oriented and trained on the LPP concept, guided her and the other learning facilitators of the school in identifying the least-learned competencies of the

school and in developing the teachers’ learning goals, implementing strategies, and schedules which were integrated in the school’s LPP plan, and; in scheduling her mentoring work.

Initially, the major challenges which Edna had to address in conducting LPP sessions were: getting her learning partners interested in the LPP and scheduling of LPP sessions. With the help of the school principal, these challenges were eventually met and at present, her mentoring efforts are highly appreciated by her learning partners and the school principal, especially after the school showed improvements in the 2011 NAT.

Aside from mentoring, Edna is a regular trainor in the Teacher Induction Program in the Schools Division of Sarangani. She feels that her learnings in EQuALLS2 also helps her in this program, as well as in the other school projects related to the teaching of English.

As a recognition of her initiatives, Edna was chosen as the ELSA Sarangani Division Awardee in English category last December 2010. More than the award, Edna finds great consolation in the smiling faces of her students, many of whom are indigenous people (IPs), when they recite in English and when they use the dictionary to find the meaning of English words they encounter for the first time in her lessons.

The Malapatan Central Elementary School as well as the members of her B’laan community were very proud when Edna was chosen as the ELSA outstanding English teacher of Malapatan, Sarangani under the EQuALLS2 in 2010.



1

Edna Santander

- 2010 Outstanding Teacher in Science, Malapatan District, Schools Division of Sarangani
- 2011 **Grand Awardee in Science** in the Search for Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teachers in the Project Schools of the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA)

It did not come as a surprise to the students, teachers and the school principal of Lun Padidu Central Elementary School in Malapatan, Sarangani when Edna Santander was chosen as the Schools Division 2010 awardee in science by the ELSA search for Outstanding Teachers among its project schools under the USAID/EQuALLS2 Project. The school was joined by the whole Malapatan municipality in celebrating her exemplary performance as a master teacher and learning facilitator for the LPP.

Edna has come a long way from the time she completed the EQuALLS2 training programs in science teaching. She has extensively used the practical work approach which involves considerable hands-on activities and explorations in learning science concepts. Her students also use the work sheets distributed by the project, coupled with active student participation and interaction in science activities. Moreover, the science kits and other equipment provided by the project are used not only by her students but by all students in her school.



“Before the science kits were given to our school by EQuALLS2, majority my students did not even know how graduated cylinders, beakers or test tubes looked like. Ever since the project gave science kits to schools, my students have been able to manipulate these science equipment with ease and confidence. Noting this classroom improvement, the school head now buys these equipment for the use of all students in the school. The PTCA and other community leaders also extend their financial help to acquire these resources.”

Her exemplary classroom practices are not confined to her teaching science. She has adopted the use of board wall to enable her students to learn new words every school day — an integrated approach to teaching both science and English in one lesson. Moreover, she has a place in her classroom where she displays good student outputs for the day. This strategy has motivated her students to turn in well-prepared work and to be more active in science activities.

The school principal and her co-teachers appreciate her sharing of these classroom practices with her learning partners under the LPP, as well as her other colleagues in science. While the DepED Region XII encourages the conduct of LPP sessions once a month, the school now holds these sessions twice a week, two hours per session. Edna makes herself available for one-on-one consultations every day of the week, as needed by her co-teachers. She responds to their queries even after the official LPP sessions.

Edna's coaching and mentoring style is best characterized as "you-can-see-me-anytime" approach, almost a 24/7 consultation schedule. Her friendly attitude has resulted in more teachers consulting her on their individual teaching activities. Moreover, she invites her peers to observe her classes so that they would be able to gain insights from her newly acquired teaching approaches and strategies.

Edna's classroom is full of indigenous, low-cost learning materials — branches of trees, leaves, seeds and discards like empty bottles and basins. She says that these materials are less intimidating because they are familiar items used by the students in their daily activities. However, more sophisticated equipment are also all over her classroom, for students to use in their science experiments.

Another laudable initiative of Edna is the regular feeding program of Lun Padidu Central Elementary School.

This initiative is a response to students who come to school without having taken meals at home. The feeding program has reduced absenteeism and has resulted in more active participation of the more disadvantaged students in her science activities.

Edna holds regular consultation sessions with the parents of her students, PTA officers and other community leaders to determine possible gaps in the science teaching strategies of the school and to develop solutions to address these gaps. She involves them in developing a seamless learning environment for the students, with the home and the community as part of the whole learning set-up. The marked improvement of the school in the 2011 NAT is happily attributed to this initiative.

Just like in 2010 when nobody was surprised that Edna was selected as the USAID/EQuALLS2 science awardee of Malapatan, Sarangani in the ELSA search for outstanding teachers in its project schools, neither was anyone surprised when she was chosen as one of the three ELSA grand awardees of the search in 2011.



2

Annalie Laidia

- **2010 Outstanding Teacher in Science, Pigkawayan District, Schools Division of Cotabato**
- **2011 Grand Awardee in Science** in the Search for Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teachers in the Project Schools of the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA)



Annalie Laidia believes that educational technologies and present day strategies are important elements in the learning landscape, especially in teaching science. Although her school is located in an area often caught by crossfires between Moro freedom fighters of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Independent Liberation Front (MILF) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines, she dreams that the day will come when the school will extensively use ICT-assisted learning materials and strategies for learning science concepts in all classes. She also wishes that new strategies result in improving the quality of education in her school; that the learners of disadvantaged communities would likewise be given this same quality education that would redound to the promotion of peace in her community.

When she was chosen to participate in the EQuALLS2 Educators' Professional Development Program, Annalie felt she could realize her dreams by absorbing as much as she could during the training programs. One of the science teaching strategies which she feels is beneficial to her students is the POE approach – predict, observe and evaluate. To her, this approach helps the students learn science concepts better, based on experimentation and gathering evidences to support their ideas and predictions. Her pupils have eventually become more observant and analytical.

Just like the other learning facilitators in ELSA schools, Annalie had an active role in identifying the least-learned competencies among the students of Pigkawayan Central Elementary School and in preparing the LPP plan, including its learning goals, implementation strategy and monitoring/evaluation plan. And just like other learning facilitators, Annalie had

“The ultimate beneficiaries of the Educators’ Professional Development Program of EQuALLS2 are the young learners of our school. One cannot describe the joy of learning in their hearts when they manipulate the laboratory equipment and realize that science is not a mystery after all.”

growing pains in conducting LPP sessions. Many of her learning partners were hesitant to adopt the teaching strategies she shared with them and the conflict of schedules resulting in the learning partners' inability to attend LPP sessions was made a convenient excuse. On the learning materials, it took Annalie some time to convince her learning partners to manipulate the science kits, stressing that they need to know how to handle these materials so that they could be good models to their students.

Her school principal provided technical assistance by making revisions in the classroom teaching schedules of her learning partners and by conducting frequent orientation sessions on the importance of LPP in the improvement of the school's NAT performance. She also persisted by continuously holding demo classes and by sharing with them the learning materials she received from EQuALLS2.

By the second quarter of School Year 2010-2011, Annalie could hardly accommodate the requests of her learning partners to assist them in their science lessons, from preparing lesson plans to actual experimentation and student evaluation. There were several instances when her fellow teachers would ask for her help while she herself was holding her own class activities. There were also times when she had to leave her own students in

order to help her learning partners. Eventually, this problem was resolved when the school principal assigned other teachers to take over her classes while she was with her mentees, giving them technical advice or observing them in their classroom activities.

Annalie considers the provision of science learning materials as one of the major contributions of EQuALLS2 to her school. They make the students more engaged in experiments and in classroom recitation. She believes that the project interventions have helped in improving the school's NAT performance, her students garnering the fifth place in the division-level Science Quiz and most important, the growing confidence of her students in conducting experiments and in explaining/defending their ideas.

Annalie's dream of giving quality education to the youth whom she considers as the most valuable resource of her community, remains for the most part, a cherished dream. But she now sees many features of this dream slowly but steadily becoming a reality.

Annalie was chosen as the ELSA outstanding Science Teacher of Pigkawayan under the EQuALLS2 in 2010. In March 2011 she was selected as one of the three grand awardees in the 2011 search for outstanding EQuALLS2 Science teachers in ELSA schools of DepED Region XII.



3

Melody Salamanca

- 2010 Outstanding Teacher in Science, Lambayong District, Schools Division of Sultan Kudarat
- 2011 Grand Awardee in Science in the Search for Outstanding USAID/EQuALLS2 Teachers in the Project Schools of the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA)



Melody Salamanca is rarely seen in her classroom. She is often in the school yard of Pidtiguian Elementary School, located in the remote village of Pidtiguian, Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat. With her science students, she is either watching them get some soil for their experiments, checking whether the faucet could be used in her lessons, sorting the branches and leaves needed as specimens, or counting the containers where science tools and gadgets would be placed. Then, she asks her learning partners and other co-teachers to examine the learning materials, so that they could also use these materials in their science classes.

For seven years, Melody has been teaching in this school which is also her alma mater. Before joining the EQuALLS2 Educators' Professional Development Program three years ago, she encountered difficulty in accessing science materials and tools for her lessons. More seriously, her students often got bored with their "chalk-talk" experiments and they either fell asleep or became noisy and restless while her classes were going on. One Grade 3 student named Carl was quite naughty and troublesome. Although he was always present in class, he loitered around, talking loudly and irritating his classmates. His test results were very low, indicating either his lack of interest in the subject or he simply did not understand the science concepts.

Although not a science major, Melody joined the science training of EQuALLS2 when she was asked by her school principal to be the representative of her school. She was challenged to learn more science concepts and teaching techniques. After completing the science training programs, Melody

"Before I employed the strategies I learned from EQuALLS2, my students listened to my lectures, but I knew they did not understand. Now they have learned to discover science concepts together with their classmates by manipulating the science learning materials. I also note that there is less misbehavior in my classes."

started to utilize indigenous learning materials and to implement the hands-on approaches to learning science. She formed various groups in her classes and gave each group specific responsibilities in conducting their experiments.

Gradually, she noticed her students become more inquisitive, display higher order thinking skills in class discussions and show resourcefulness in obtaining learning materials. They even volunteer to get materials available at home and surrounding areas. Carl, now in Grade 6, has excelled in conducting science experiments, and has made colorful materials like graphs and illustrations. More importantly he now shows leadership potentials, often conducting peer teaching sessions among his slow learner classmates. Melody's co-teachers with whom she has shared her learnings from EQuALLS2, have also begun noticing positive changes in their students.

Of the many strategies which Melody learned from EQuALLS2 and which she has shared with her learning partners, the group work approach has been observed to result in positive changes in the students. This approach is anchored on the fact that the responsibility of learning rests on the learners, given the right concepts and

delivered in a fun, enjoyable manner. Melody and her fellow-teachers now maximize the group work approach among the students to enable them to discover for themselves the concepts and theories behind what they observe around them. In short, the students have become more engaged in science exploration.

Melody and her learning partners now use locally available and affordable materials to explain scientific phenomena. They also prove to be practical and are easier to relate with. In place of expensive materials and tools, Melody learned from EQuALLS2 that she could use alternatives that would give the same results and outcomes.

Parents, community leaders, businessmen, and other local groups who have seen the improvement of student performance in the 2011 NAT, now show more interest in the school projects. They put up counterpart activities and give cash or in-kind donations to finance these projects.

Melody was named the outstanding science teacher of Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat in the ELSA search for outstanding teachers in 2010. In 2011, she was selected as one of the three EQuALLS2 grand awardees among all the science teachers in ELSA schools of DepED Region XII.



4

Flora Mae Baylaran

- 2010 Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teacher in Science, Sto. Nino District, Schools Division of South Cotabato



Every day, Flora Mae Baylaran goes to her class and greets her students with a big smile, and they instantly warm up to her with equally big smiles. She is a young teacher and her classroom atmosphere makes one feel her exuberance and enthusiasm in teaching, using colorful audio-visual aids, attractively packaged books, reference materials and science gadgets displayed (and used!) in accessible areas.

Flora Mae finished her college program in elementary education just a few years ago and started teaching in J. Blanco Elementary School at the start of School Year 2010-2011. She transferred from Ambalgan Elementary School where she taught for three years. She was therefore considerably worried when she commenced her work as a learning facilitator at J. Blanco. She underwent the EQuALLS2 teacher development program while she was still teaching at the Ambalgan Elementary School and she was getting ready to do her mentoring work there when she was transferred to J. Blanco Elementary School. She did not quite know how to approach her work as a learning facilitator.

“Although my school is not an ELSA school, the teacher-in-charge (TIC), parents and community leaders are one of the feeling that my learnings from EQuALLS2 are beneficial to their children. Thus, they help in sourcing financial assistance for the acquisition of science learning materials.”

And then, there was a second concern. The new school was, and still is, a non-EQuALLS2 school. It did not receive the support project inputs like science kits, reference materials and other learning aids which have been given to the project’s recipient schools. Neither was it expected to implement the LPP.

Fortunately for Flora Mae, the teacher-in-charge (TIC) of the school was among the school heads that attended a division-wide LPP orientation and training workshop for the municipality of Sto.

Nino, South Cotabato. The TIC learned that the DepED Regional director requested the program officials to include even the non-project schools in the LPP orientation sessions and training workshops. Thus, the TIC was able to participate in these activities. After participating in these LPP sessions, she requested Flora Mae to help in crafting the LPP program of the school.

The other teachers of the school did not even think twice in deciding to help in these tasks. Nor did they see Flora Mae's being new in the teaching profession and her short residence in the school as deterrents. What they considered more important was her potentials as a learning facilitator who would share with them her learnings from EQuALLS2.

Flora Mae generously shared the science teaching strategies she learned from EQuALLS2, particularly the learning-by-doing approach. She did demo teaching on the mechanics of this approach, one of which is dividing the students into groups with specific tasks and roles in conducting science experiments. The lack of science gadgets did

not discourage Flora Mae and her co-teachers. They used indigenous materials readily available in the community. Flora Mae and her learning partners noted that with this approach, students have ceased to be passive learners. They are now active participants in the science activities and they feel responsible for the tasks assigned to them. Furthermore, they have learned to express themselves well when describing their work.

There was another positive development. The school governing board (SGC) holds its regular meetings in the school's multi-purpose hall and its officers regularly meet with the school officials and faculty on the school projects and concerns. These meetings provided a venue for orienting the community leaders on LPP, and they have shown commitment to the program by helping finance its activities.

In 2010 Flora Mae was awarded the outstanding EQuALLS2 science teacher title in Sto. Nino, South Cotabato under the ELSA search for EQuALLS2 outstanding teachers.



5

Mary Jane Rafael

- 2010 Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teacher in Science, Tantaran District, Schools Division of South Cotabato

The responsibilities of a learning facilitator are not new to Mary Jane Rafael, a science Master Teacher 1 of Tantaran Central Elementary School in Tantaran, South Cotabato. She has been in the service for more than 15 years and as a master teacher, she is frequently requested to help conduct in-service training programs by the Department of Education Region XII and to manage school-based workshops for teachers.

Hence, when her school principal asked her to participate in the EQuALLS2 Educators' Professional Development Program in order to further enhance her knowledge and skills in science teaching and to prepare to serve as a learning facilitator to her co-teachers, she readily agreed, thinking that these tasks were already quite known to her.

Mary Jane realized that the EQuALLS2 science training program was quite rigorous, with many concepts and strategies introduced to the participants for the first time. Moreover, she learned that the project's LPP would entail not only conducting demo sessions and managing school-based training programs. She learned that it was much, much more. Once she realized the big tasks ahead, her first instinct was to back out of the program. However, she decided to take a second look at the present-day science teaching strategies of EQuALLS2. She did not stop at looking. She in fact learned so much and had another realization – that these strategies would be helpful to her classes .

Hence, she decided to carry on. She now says she is glad she decided to continue participating in the training programs. Confident that she had been fully armed with the knowledge she gained from the program, she started her LPP work with the help of her school principal. She helped initiate the creation of the LPP Advisory Council, specifically the formulation of the roles and responsibilities of



“EQuALLS2 has helped reduce tardiness, absenteeism and drop-out rates in our school. Students now come to school from Monday to Friday and are more interested in school work.”



the officers and members. She is now the science focal learning facilitator of the school-based LPP.

At the initial stage of the LPP, she worked closely with the school principal and the mentors of the other subject areas, namely English and math, in crafting the school's LPP learning goals and plan, based on the least-learned competencies shown in previous NAT results. She also helped the school principal in the preparation of the learning partner/mentee selection criteria, pre-LPP assessment of learning partners for the baseline data of the program, the modification of teachers' work load to allow them to participate in LPP sessions and the conduct of school-level LPP orientation sessions.

As Mary Jane had predicted, she encountered some challenges in her LPP work, overlapping

activities, conflict of schedules due to unprogrammed tasks that demand teacher attention and lack of funds for acquiring the science learning materials needed in implementing the strategies and techniques she has learned from the EQuALLS 2 training programs. Mary Jane and the other learning facilitators in her school made a plan to share learning materials with neighboring schools and to hold fund raising campaigns among business groups, local government units and other community groups in order to generate funds for these learning materials. Already, they have made considerable headway in terms of soliciting the assistance of community stake holders. Donations in kind have been given by various groups and individuals.

A way-forward task for Mary Jane is the regular monitoring of the progress of her learning partners in implementing the strategies learned from the EQuALLS2 science training programs. She also plans to solicit more feedback from her learning partners on the present LPP set-up and operational strategies in her school, and revise them as needed.

In 2010, Mary Jane was chosen as the Tantangan science awardee in the ELSA search for Outstanding EQuALLS2 Teachers in Region XII.



WINNERS' FOLIO: Outstanding Teachers from DepED Region XII Schools
Assisted by the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA) under the EQuALLS2 Project



Napiza Uzman

- 2010 Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teacher in Science, Schools Division of Cotabato City



In 2008, the school principal and the teachers of Krislamville Elementary School could hardly believe the news that their school was chosen as a beneficiary of the EQuALLS2 project. They were very happy to know that benefits included: a series of training programs for their of PTA, professional development training programs for the school principal and selected teachers, who would in turn serve as learning facilitators to their co-teachers, provision of learning materials like science and math kits, and the community incentive grant for the improvement of the school facilities and resources.

Napiza Usman, one of the teachers in this school, recalls, “Ever since I can remember, our school has hungered for books, desks, and blackboards. Even if the school is in the heart of Cotabato City, it has barely received these educational resources which are the basic requisites for learning.”

“Majority of the teachers in our school are new in the teaching profession. My training in EQuALLS2 has given me confidence to help them enrich their teaching competencies and gain self-confidence in doing their classroom work.”

And she was more pleasantly surprised when she was informed that she had been chosen to undergo the project’s teacher training in science and to prepare her to be one of the school’s learning facilitators. Like a hungry child, she absorbed with gusto all the science learning strands in the training sessions. She was likewise a conscientious participant in the project’s training program on mentoring techniques and approaches.

She now shares with her co-teachers the teaching competencies she has learned as well as the teacher handbooks and other reference materials she received from EQuALLS2. Furthermore, she regularly consults the Cotabato Schools division officers in order to give feedback on the progress of LPP in her school as well as get guidance and updates on the program.

Napiza's learning partners showed a high degree of interest in the Training++ conducted in Cotabato City. Napiza served as one of the science trainers and resource persons in several sessions. She also held several demo lessons to share the science teaching strategies she learned from the EQuALLS2 science training programs. In particular, she shared with the participants the nature and scope of the practical work approach and hands-on learning activities with the use of science manipulables.

She also held materials development sessions where she demonstrated how to develop low-cost and locally available science gadgets. After the Training ++ sessions, Napiza was tasked to help in the evaluation of the different sessions and also in the preparation of training reports and other post-training documents.

In her science classes, Napiza has shifted from the teacher-based strategies to student-centered approaches. She says "Our school now utilizes a collaborative-participative method of teaching where the teacher assumes the roles of facilitators and resource persons and where students gain as much insights, discover for themselves the science concepts of the lessons, and draw conclusions based on the explorations they have made. The teacher motivates the students to think critically through various techniques in asking questions."

As a learning facilitator, Napiza continuously works with her learning partners in improving their LPP activities of the school. She regularly holds demo sessions and other sharing in groups or one-on-one LPP sessions. She also helps them prepare learning materials as well as share teaching insights with them during the science sessions of the LPP. They also regularly consult her on their daily lessons and use the science learning materials provided by EQuALLS2. As a school which has long hungered for educational resources, Napiza's co-teachers feel that they need more learning materials. To address this concern, they have sought the assistance of different groups like local businessmen and the local government executives to provide these materials. Help has started to come – supplies and materials are provided by business groups and other organizations.

Finally, Krislamville feels that its hunger for educational resources is now being addressed, through the pro-active efforts of the school principal and teachers.

In 2010, Napiza was chosen as the Cotabato City science awardee in the ELSA Search for Outstanding EQuALLS2 Teachers in Region XII.





Melinda Lee

- 2010 Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teacher in Science, Esperanza District, Schools Division of Sultan Kudarat

Being a full time teacher and busy family woman, Melinda Lee had to consult her husband and five children before she made a decision to join the first EQuALLS2 science mentors' training program. Like many teachers who were asked to join the program, she was told at the onset that it entailed her being away from home and also from her school several days during the training sessions and a lot more work once the LPP is launched. Her family showed support for whatever decision she would make; hence she was able to inform her school principal that he could join the program.

Looking back, Melinda feels she made the right decision. Although she has been teaching for more than eighteen years, she was able to learn about present-day classroom teaching techniques suitable to the needs of today's learners. For her, the applicable adage to describe her EQuALLS2 learnings is: "I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand."

In addition to acquiring present-day science concepts, Melinda believes that the learning materials and kits provided by the project have benefitted her, her co-teachers and pupils of Paitan Elementary School in Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat.

At first, Melinda had difficulties applying the new techniques she learned, such as the practical work approach, the 4As, and POE – predict, observe and evaluate. She had to shift from the classroom practices she was so used to doing in her science classes to those that she learned from EQuALLS2. It took some time before the input grew on her but her persistence resulted in noticeable improvements in her students' participation in science experiments in particular and in their attitudes towards learning in general. Specific improvements were in terms of communicating, classifying, analyzing interpreting, recording, reading and other higher order thinking skills.



"Science learning should not be confined to the four corners of the classroom. Students should be encouraged to be observant and alert in their surroundings, in school or in their homes. This behaviour is the first step in getting introduced to science concepts."

Eventually, she became an advocate of these approaches. When she served as science facilitator/trainor in the Sultan Kudarat Division Training++, she conducted demo lessons using these approaches and she has made follow-through dialogues with her learning partners during individual and group LPP sessions. They have likewise noticed improvements in their students' performance in science classes. The school principal of her school and also her co-teachers feel that the use of these approaches has resulted in the school's 2009-10 mean percentage score in science of the NAT which increased by 5.80% from that of the previous year.

Melinda cites a number of challenges she encountered in her mentoring work at the initial stage of the LPP implementation, foremost of which was lack of time. All the teachers in her school had full-time loads. This issue was resolved when DepED Region XII issued a memo enjoining schools to allot two hours every month for school-based in-service training of teachers, including LPP. The school principal made adjustments so that the teachers could be free for these activities.

Another issue Melinda had to contend with was the diverse orientations and situations of her learning partners. With her patience and

persistence, they began to appreciate her efforts and eventually adopted the techniques she shared with them. Now, she can barely cope with the numerous requests of her co-teachers to respond to their queries on their science lessons. However, she manages to assist her learning partners especially when she receives encouraging and positive feedback from them.

Melinda has initiated other science-related activities to enhance student knowledge in science. She proposed the construction of a science-math park in the school grounds and the renovation of a vacant room to be used as a science room and library. She plans to put the science learning materials given by EQuALLS2 in this room, so that the students can use them in their science work. She is also the adviser of the school's science club and holds science quiz bees and science trivia sessions every month, both aimed at enriching student knowledge of science concepts. Her students have participated in district science quizzes and they have "brought home the bacon" by winning in several quiz categories.

In 2010, Melinda was chosen as the Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat science awardee in the ELSA search for Outstanding EQuALLS2 Teachers in Region XII.



1

Araceli Robles

- 2010 Outstanding Teacher in Math, Esperanza District, Schools Division of Sultan Kudarat
- **2011 Grand Awardee in Math**, under the Search for Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teachers in the Project Schools of the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA)

Araceli Robles recalls the days when her students dreaded attending her classes. “A big majority of them were *math phobics*,” she sighs. She adds that many of her students had many not-so pleasant impressions on the subject – “Boring,” “It is very difficult, nothing but computations and formulas.” She often wondered why children were either afraid or bored with the oft repeated lessons. She thought it was especially surprising for pupils to consider math as boring when it has all the features that could tickle their natural curiosity.

When she learned that she was to participate in the math training programs of the EQuALLS2 Educators’ Professional Development Program, she predicted that these training programs would provide her with the opportunity to learn teaching strategies that would make her students like math, or at least not hate it. During the math core programs and refresher courses, Araceli tried to internalize as many techniques in math teaching as she could. Although she already had about 30 years of experience in teaching math, still she was able to acquire a number of student-centered techniques which she felt would be useful in her teaching.

Back in Esperanza Central School in Sultan Kudarat, Araceli conducted demo lessons for her co-teachers and shared the math kit and other learning materials she received from EQuALLS2. She also served as resource person/facilitator in the math sessions of Training ++ in Sultan Kudarat. As a recognition of the leadership she displayed in the Training ++ activities, Araceli was elected Chairman and President of the Municipal Mentors’ Association of Esperanza and Over-All Chairman of the municipal level Training ++. Her major responsibilities were: coordination of the development of the training design, actual conduct of the training activities, training evaluation, preparation of training reports and managing the logistics required by the training.



“Children have negative attitude towards the subject partly because of the uninteresting teaching strategies that focus only on drills, memorization of formulas, computation of number exercises and number drills. The already complicated world of numbers is made more difficult by traditional teaching strategies that teachers use.”

In 2009, Araceli developed instructional devices to enable her students to learn math through hands-on manipulation of the following: fraction wheel which introduces fraction concepts by rotating the wheel into identified fraction form or value; fraction clock which enables pupils to visualize the operations of similar and dissimilar fractions; blank and number squares to determine odd or even numbers, prime and composite, as well as to introduce ratio and proportion and concepts of whole numbers, and other math devices. These

math devices are designed to improve mathematical thinking skills and provide experiential math learning based on real-life situations.

These instructional devices have been adopted by all schools of Esperanza district, including the non-project schools. Math teachers, even those who are not Araceli's learning partners, consult her regularly to learn more about applications and the mechanics of operation,

Araceli's other advocacies in math teaching are: Math Mentors Outreach Program which aims to share the learnings gained from EQuALLS2 with schools in neighboring communities and a school-based outreach training for math teachers in Doroteo Pastor Memorial Elementary School, a non-ELSA school. Araceli feels that her learnings from EQuALLS2 should also be shared with as many math teachers as possible, so that the *math phobic* students could learn to enjoy the subject.

In December 2010, Araceli was chosen as the teacher awardee in math by the Schools Division of Sultan Kudarat among teachers in ELSA schools. In March 2011, she was one of the three grand awardees in mathematics among all ELSA teachers in Region XII.



2

Bridget Nemeno

- 2010 Outstanding Teacher in Math, Sto. Nino District, Schools Division of South Cotabato
- 2011 Grand Awardee in Math in the Search for Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teachers in the Project Schools of the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA)



Although Bridget Nemeno is a graduate of Nutrition and Dietetics, she has been teaching math for the last 18 years, and she has enjoyed every moment of seeing the “Eureka” look of her students when they finally understand math formulas, concepts and how-to steps in solving math problems. At first, she had a personal reason for teaching the subject. She was to learn math concepts “on the job” so that she would be able to tutor her own children in their math assignments. Later however, she decided to continue with teaching math because she had learned to enjoy guiding her students in their math work.

“I hope teachers would stop spoonfeeding their students but instead, ask thought-provoking questions because they will discover that there are nuggets of wisdom, though in- the-rough, which are insights worth considering in the planning of classroom activities.”

Bridget believes that teaching is “touching lives in a positive way.” When she acquires teaching strategies through training programs she participates in, she does not use them in her classroom immediately. She does informal “pre-tests” with her children. She discusses them with her children and prepares “try-out” exercises for them to do. If her children find them enjoyable and meaningful, then she uses them in school. Through this process, she is able to pilot test the strategies first so that she can anticipate reactions and plan appropriate counter reactions that could optimize the student experiences in math activities.

Bridget has found that the process of “pre-testing” is useful in her LPP mentoring work. The process first involves a demo-teaching session after which she solicits feedback from her learning partners, particularly the suitability of the techniques in the demo lesson to the needs and learning styles of their students. Together, they make the necessary revisions, adaptation and other contextualization work in order to make the lessons more fun and interesting.

Bridget's learning partners agree with her that the teacher-centered, Socratic approach where students are passive observers and listeners is a thing of the past. Thus, with the guidance and advice of the school principal, she and her learning partners jointly plan the LPP sessions precisely to generate school-based math approaches in order to respond to the unique needs of their learners.

The task is not easy. Although all the teachers are willing to embrace learner-centered approaches, paradigm shift is a complex and complicated process, especially because many of the teachers have been so used to teaching with their “comfort zone” strategies, many of which need updating. For her part, Bridget makes it a point to regularly share all the hand-outs, instructional materials and reference materials given by EQuALLS2, and to explain the objectives and mechanics of using these strategies in LPP sessions and in one-on-one dialogues with her learning partners.

As chairman of the school's special committee on the preparation and development of instructional materials in mathematics, Bridget coordinates and gives advice to her co-teachers on planning, production and actual utilization of learning materials and audio visual aids. Further, she visits her learning partners during their own classes and gives them suggestions on how to improve their lesson developments. She notes that her learning partners welcome these suggestions especially

after they see the good results among their own students. Bridget often gets notes of appreciation from her learning partners, thanking her for her patience and advice.

A major concern of Bridget is student assessment. Teachers usually rely mainly on written tests in evaluating student performance. Bridget has started to introduce the assessment tools she acquired from EQuALLS2 and she is hopeful that they would be adopted by her learning partners the way they had welcomed the teaching strategies.

Bridget has another area of interest – providing hot meals to students, especially those who do not take their meals before going to school. As a nutritionist, she helps prepare low-cost but nutritious meals, with locally available ingredients like moringa (malunggay)-based recipes.

When she was chosen as the math awardee in of South Cotabato Division under the ELSA search for outstanding EquALLS2 teachers, she articulated the project's ultimate goal: To draw from the students through well-crafted questions their own insights which are valuable tools for creating newer and more interesting activities.

Bridget was the 2010 Math Awardee of Sto. Nino, South Cotabato and one of the three EQuALLS2 Grand Awardees in Mathematics under the ELSA Search for Outstanding Teacher-Mentors in its project sites.



3

Liza Baron

- 2010 Outstanding Teacher in Math, Lambayong, District, Schools Division of Sultan Kudarat
- 2011 **Grand Awardee in Math** in the Search for Outstanding USAID/EQuALLS2 Teachers in the Project Schools of the Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance (ELSA)

Liza Baron uses simple, low-cost but colorful learning materials and kits in her math classes. Her students play around with these kits and actively discuss the math formulas, and whenever they have queries, they go to Liza to give explanations, examples and further details on the formulas. Then, they go back to their discussions and give day-to-day application of the math concepts that they have learned. The classroom atmosphere is not quite like that of a conventional math class where the teacher does the talking all the time. The students are engaged, defending their ideas or listening to their classmates' arguments.

This has not always been the environment in Liza's classes. She began noticing more animated student participation when she started to make her students cut colored paper into different shapes and to use crayons to do their math activities. She learned this approach and many more learner-friendly strategies in teaching math from the math core and refresher courses under the Educators' Professional Development Program of EQuALLS2.

"As a student, I did not like numbers and was afraid to attend my math classes. As a teacher, I initially had problems teaching the subject. But my EQuALLS2 math training gradually made me like it. I spent hours manipulating the math gadgets in order to gain confidence in using them in class. Now, I must admit I have fallen in love with math."

Liza has received good feedback from her co-teachers on the strategies she has shared with them. They tell her that their students are already beginning to enjoy the subject and that the strategies



she has shared with them have registered considerable positive impact, foremost of which is their school's having won almost all the major prizes in the 2010-2011 district-wide math Olympiad.

Because of these positive changes in the math classes in Mamali Elementary School in Mamali, Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat, Liza and her learning partners have revised the math section of their LPP plan, making it more robust in terms of the development and preparation of learning materials and application activities. The plan includes more demo sessions and group mentoring on how teachers can increase the time allotment for students playing multi-colored board games especially DAMATH, an educational board game where players have to do mathematical computations whenever they capture an opponent's chip. In the game, players must use the 4 basic mathematical operations. The plan envisions to solicit more student recitation and peer review of classmates' output. It also includes assessment strategies to measure student progress.

Liza's LPP sessions are conducted twice a week, with at least two hours per session. The atmosphere is friendly, and one can hardly identify who is mentoring who, as the learning partners actively participate in the discussions. In addition to the group sessions, Liza also devotes an almost 24/7 one-on-one dialogs with her learning partners. She is with them when they prepare their lesson plans, the learning materials and audio-visual aids. Like other learning facilitators, she regularly observes them as they conduct their classes and gives suggestions for improvement.

A believer in the value of audio-visual aids in promoting interactive learning, Liza has sought

the help of the school principal in sourcing funds for the acquisition of learning materials such as colored paper, crayons and other supplies. The response of parents and the community as a whole is encouraging. To begin with, the PTA and local officials already have a good working relationship with the school. Sometime back, the PTA received a community incentive grant from EQuALLS2 to help finance a water supply system for the school. The community was thankful to the project for this assistance because it has benefitted the students and teachers alike. Hence, it took the school only a little bit of resource mobilization to make the community give assistance for the acquisition of math learning materials.

For their part, the school principal and Liza's team have prepared a long term sustainability plan by embarking on school-based micro-enterprises. The main project is vegetable planting. The big school grounds shall be the project site, where high value crops are to be planted.

Liza was chosen as the EQuALLS2 2010 outstanding math teacher of Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat and in 2011, as one of the three Grand Awardees in the ELSA Search for Outstanding Science Teacher-Mentors in its project sites.



4

Ofelia Chiva

- **2010 Outstanding USAID/EQuALLS2 Teacher in Math, Pigkawayan, District, Schools Division of Cotabato Province**



Upon her completion of the core and refresher courses of the EQuALLS2 Educators' Professional Development Program, Ofelia Chiva decided to focus on one strategy she learned – the learning-by-doing approach. In addition to what was given during training programs, she developed games, puzzles, charts, diagrams and other gadgets to aid in student-centered activities.

She did not regret this decision. She noted the gradual improvement in student participation in her classes. They would even volunteer to prepare materials using their own materials and items available at home. Seeing these good results among her students, Ofelia shared the learning-by-doing strategy with her co-teachers and they too noticed that their students have become more active in discussions and in doing tasks assigned to them.

When LPP was launched in August 2010, Ofelia and her co-teachers developed the school-based LPP with the learning-by-doing approach as the springboard for the school's individual and group mentoring activities. Knowing that instructional materials needed for this approach would not be sufficient for all the math teachers of the school, Ofelia and her co-teachers, under the guidance of the school principal, planned on doing some improvisational work. The improvised materials were made from local materials which are readily available, accessible and affordable but can serve the same learning objectives.

“There were initial worries among my co-teachers in joining my LPP sessions. However, they gradually became interested in the learning strategies I learned in EQuALLS2, particularly the ICT-assisted instruction.”

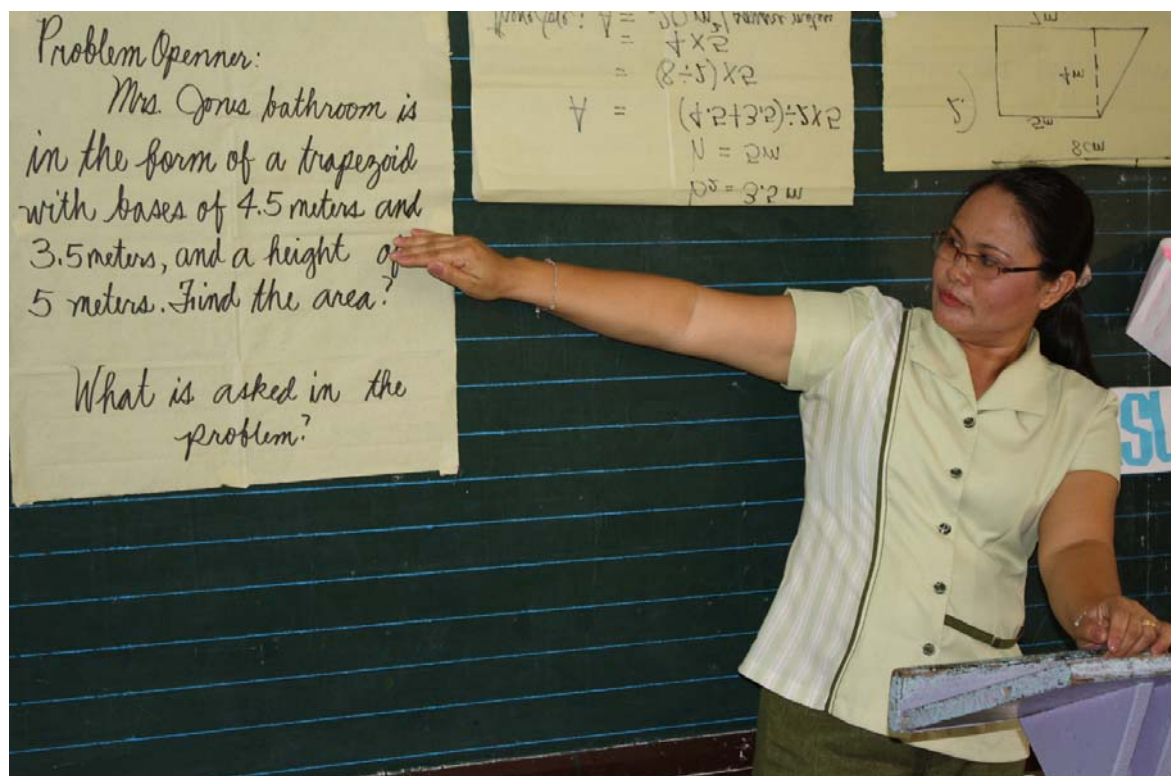
The results were encouraging – the formative, summative and periodic test results increased by at least 10% from the students' previous scores – from 65% to 75% or from 75% to 85%. The school principal of the school also noted some unintended benefits from the regular LPP sessions. They have strengthened the bond among the teachers. They have become more open in sharing their audio-visual aids with each other and have shown willingness to stay even beyond school hours for their LPP sessions.

An innovative mentoring strategy introduced by Ofelia is the integration of the features of the LPP and the SLAC. The Training++ served as initial platform in this integration, where she held sharing sessions which covered not only math concepts, training strategies and materials development but also sessions on educational trends and their applicability in Pigkawayan. The latter sessions are usually discussed in LAC sessions. After the three Training++ cycles, Ofelia and her learning partners prepared their weekly activities adopting this approach of integrating LPP and LAC activities. The LAC school-based projects are included in their discussions, most notably peace education which is a major concern of the school that is located in a security-challenged area; K-12 which is presently a major intervention of DepED, and other recent developments in the education landscape. These LPP cum LAC sessions are held on weekends as the teachers have full teaching load throughout the week. Having realized the value of these sessions, there is 100% learning partners attendance in LPP cum LAC sessions despite the schedule.

Ofelia makes herself available to her learning partners from 4 to 5 pm every day. She also goes to nearby schools that request her to hold either demo sessions, to discuss their concerns and/or to show them how to make instructional materials and audiovisual aids in math.

To Ofelia, evaluating student performance is a key component of the teaching process, and basis for remediation and planning the content points to be handled in subsequent lessons. She notes that, "The usual practice before was that the test results were merely recorded in the student log. They were not analyzed... thus, teachers did not have enough basis for what to teach next." It took her some time to make her learning partners assess the test results of their students. This practice, together with the knowledge and skills gained by the learning partners are seen as factors that improved NAT results of the school. Certainly, Ofelia feels that her efforts in implementing her project-acquired learning as well as her mentoring work have paid off.

In 2010, Ofelia was chosen as the EQuALLS2 2010 outstanding math teacher in the ELSA Schools of Pigkawayan, Cotabato Province.



5

Evelyn Jacinto

- 2010 Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teacher in Math, Tantaran District, Schools Division of South Cotabato



The school principal of San Felipe Elementary School in Tantaran, South Cotabato, has been actively involved in ELSA activities since 2004. Her active involvement has inspired Evelyn Jacinto to also get involved in ELSA initiatives, particularly in the Educators' Professional Development Program.

After completing all the math core and refresher courses, she devoted substantial time and effort in the planning, implementation and post-training activities of the first cycle of Training++ in the Tantaran district. As a recognition of her leadership in Training++ Cycle One, she was elected as Vice-President and then President of the math mentors group in the subsequent two cycles. She managed the development of the math training design, actual implementation, training evaluation and report writing. She also served as trainor/facilitator in all the Training++ cycles.

“Although I felt I was adequately prepared to teach math, I learned many new strategies from the EQuALLS2 math core training programs and refresher courses. In fact, they equipped me with my assignment as trainor in the Math Training++ programs which we held in my school district. At the classroom level, the real happiness of a teacher is when she sees her students learning from her lessons.”

Her hard work did not go unnoticed. The Schools Division of South Cotabato selected her as one of the division-level trainors in the following training programs: *Seminar/Workshop on Mastery of Curriculum Content in Elementary Mathematics* and *Mathematics Teaching for Slow Learners*. Hence, Evelyn has trained not only her co-teachers but also all math teachers in the entire province of South Cotabato. The participants in both training programs are teachers in non-EQuALLS2 schools. Evelyn has participated in the division's effort to roll-out the project's math teaching strategies to all math teachers in the province.

This achievement is a source of pride to her, her colleagues, and her school principal. The math teaching strategies which Evelyn learned from EQuALLS2 and which she utilizes in her classroom have resulted in marked improvement among her students. They use the manipulables in solving math problems and refer to the math kits in their classroom work.

Evelyn now exerts less effort in lecturing or explaining math concepts because she says the “students themselves have learned how to learn” through hands-on activities. She also adds that her students are now more articulate in explaining their ideas and in asking questions themselves.

Although the LPP was launched in her school only in the second Quarter of 2010, Evelyn looks forward to a doing the full implementation of her mentoring in the next few months. At present, she has done one-on-one meetings with her learning partners and group mentoring. She



plans to do more observations of her learning partners' classes as well as conduct a series of demo teaching to expose them to more strategies in teaching math which she learned from EQuALLS2.

As a learning facilitator, Evelyn has realized that the number one strategy for change is the attitude of the teacher toward her work. If she is concerned with the future of the little children waiting for her every day, then she must learn to love her work, teach them everything she has learned. Her real satisfaction comes when she learns that her pupils are learning. She tries to keep this in mind while she teaches, and also continuously shares these thoughts with her learning partners.

Evelyn is fully aware that she has a long way to go as a learning facilitator. Aside from sharing her learnings on technical content and teaching strategies with her learning partners, she has identified the basic instructional materials needed from Grades 1 to 6. Substantial resources are needed to acquire these instructional materials. Thus, she holds continuing resource mobilization work dialog with her co-teachers, the school principal, PTA officers and members, local executives, community business groups, NGOs and religious organizations. Assistance comes in the form of cash and in-kind items. Books and reference materials have started to come from local and foreign NGOs and they are used extensively by students and teachers alike. Emboldened by her little successes, Evelyn plans to link with other groups to obtain more resources for her school.

Evelyn was chosen as the EQuALLS2 2010 outstanding math teacher in the ELSA Schools of Tantaran, South Cotabato.



6

Genny Rabago

- 2010 Outstanding USAID/ EQuALLS2 Teacher in Math, Schools Division of Cotabato City

Genny Rabago is one of the many EQuALLS 2 learning facilitators who have used the school learning action cell (SLAC) in conducting mentoring work in her school, the Krislamville Elementary School. She started using the SLAC in 2009, even before the LPP was formally launched in Cotabato City. Established in the 80s, the learning action cell is a school-based venue for conducting teacher-initiated in-service training activities and there are SLACs all over the country where teacher development programs are conducted. In Genny's school, LAC activities are held regularly; hence, she decided to share her learnings from EQuALLS2 with her math co-teachers during the LAC sessions.

Genny's initiative paid off for. By the time the LPP was introduced in Cotabato City, her learning partners were already used to her mentoring sessions. The only major LPP tasks that the school head and Genny carried out were the identification of least learned-competencies and preparation of learning goals based on these least-learned competencies. The teachers who are already used to holding mentoring sessions did not anymore encounter difficulties in adjusting their time schedules and activities. They only had to integrate the LPP activities in their LAC hour.

In the beginning of School Year 2010-2011, Genny developed a teacher activity plan that introduced the LPP scheme with ease. It had the following objectives: involve Krislamville teachers in planning activities to improve student achievement in math, and; develop innovative instructional materials targeting specific learning goals. The teacher learning activities were conducted every last Friday of the month from June to December during SLAC sessions. The activities were focused on least-learned competencies such as ratio and proportions; computing percentages, fractions problem solving and basic geometry.



"I tell my students I am their mother in school. I encourage them to tell me their concerns, both in and out of school. Once I gain their confidence, they become more active in the classroom. I have a high sense of fulfilment every time I see my students enjoying their activities."

Having undergone all the EQuALLS2 training programs, Genny was a natural choice to serve as trainor and facilitator in the three cycles of Training++ in Cotabato City. In addition to several lecture sessions on present-day math concepts, she held several demo lessons in math where she shared the teaching strategies she learned from EQuALLS2. Moreover, she also handled the session on instructional materials development and evaluating pupil performance in math.

There were other tasks at hand, including the regular observation of learning partners' classes and the technical help that would help the learning partners improve their teaching styles and strategies. Also, she had to pay special attention to new teachers who made frequent requests for her to assist them in lesson planning and choosing appropriate strategies to teach math concepts. Genny has been able to carry out these tasks with vigor and enthusiasm, and her co-teachers have likewise shown their

appreciation by taking over some of her classes whenever other teachers need her help. She believes that the important roles of a learning facilitator, in addition to sharing strategies and giving suggestions to improve the teaching strategies of her learning partners, are to show genuine concern for the learning partners and listen to their feedback and insights which may be used for planning future LPP activities.

Genny considers the EQuALLS2 math kits, manipulables and other learning materials as helpful learning tools because they are user-friendly and ready-to-use. Teachers need minimal orientation to be able to use them. Aware of the fact that they need to be replaced sometime soon, Genny and her co-teachers have started several fund raising campaigns for replacement of these learning resources.

In 2010, Genny was chosen as the EQuALLS2 2010 outstanding math teacher in the ELSA Schools of Cotabato City.



7

Lea Loro

- **2010 Outstanding USAID/EQuALLS2 Teacher in Math, Malapatan District, Schools Division of Sarangani**

Eager to share the math content strands and strategies in teaching math which she learned from EQuALLS2, Lea Loro created small discussion groups in June 2010 among her co-teachers in

Mamanawa Elementary School, Sapu Masla, Malapatan, Sarangani. This was before the LPP was launched in August 2010. She had reasons for this initiative. She wanted to make the sharing while her learnings were still fresh in her mind and so that her co-teachers could already utilize them in their classes at the start of the school year.



“Although I have so much work every day, seeing the improvement in student participation is more than a reward for me. I hope that eventually, with pupils beginning to show more interest in schooling, absenteeism and drop-out rates would be reduced.”

These informal sharing sessions proved beneficial to the school. When LPP was introduced in the municipality of Malapatan, Lea and her co-teachers already had firm ideas on the least-learned competencies of their students. They were able to carry out with ease the LPP planning work, from the division level to the district and school levels. Like many schools in Malapatan, Mamanawa Elementary School has been able to achieve beyond what was prescribed in DepED Region XII Memo Number 86 Series of 2010 which suggests a once a month two-hour LPP sessions. The school devotes at least two hours weekly for its LPP sessions. This achievement is attributed to Lea’s proactive approach in conducting mentoring sessions.

The LPP is widely accepted by the teachers of the school. They observe that the instructional materials and the teaching techniques that Lea has shared with them have resulted in improvement

in student interest to join classroom activities. The school has a big Muslim and B'laan population. The teachers are not familiar with their dialects. When they started to use eye-catching and colorful instructional materials, they noted that the students became curious and interested to use them. Since then, they have also used these materials in their own classrooms.

For her part, Lea continues to conduct one-on-one and group mentoring with her learning partners. She knows that she has a big mentoring responsibility and the LPP requires considerable time and effort from her, but it is rewarding to see the improvement in student attitude toward schooling in general and she hopes that this would reduce absenteeism and drop-outs. She also hopes that the school's math rating in the NAT would improve in the next school year.

To sustain the LPP gains in Mamanawa Elementary School, the school principal and Lea continue to link with various groups in the community and orient them on the school activities that need their support. These groups

have begun to provide assistance to the LPP as well as other educational projects in the community. Lea feels that a continuing networking with them would sustain their interest in helping the project initiatives of the school.

Looking back at the EQuALLS2 math training programs she underwent under Educators' Professional Development Program, Lea notes that she did not go back to her school empty-handed from the core and refresher courses that she attended. Aside from the technical content and strategies she learned, she had handouts, books, modules and instructional materials she was able to share with her co-teachers. She did not mind if she carried these heavy materials or if sometimes she had to pay for excess baggage. The happy look of her co-teachers and students whenever she showed and shared these materials with them, has made her say, "It was worth it."

Lea was chosen as the EQuALLS2 2010 outstanding math teacher in the ELSA Schools of Malapatan, Sarangani.



Meet the Partners of the EQuALLS2 Educators' Professional Development Program

Valuable inputs and advice were provided by many project partners during the planning and implementation of the EQuALLS2 Search for Outstanding Teachers in English, Science and Math in the ELSA sites of Region XII, most notably:

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School Heads of the 21 Winners

Peter Van Ang-ug, J. Marquez School of Peace, Cotabato City
 Tess Apao, Krislamville Elementary School, Cotabato City
 Crisencia Gayosa, Sagasa Elementary School, Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat
 Marigold Querimet, Paitan Elementary School, Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat
 Delia Lirazan, Esperanza Elementary School, Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat
 Darwin Galang, Mamali Elementary School, Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat
 Agnes Lim, Pidtiguian Elementary School, Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat
 Regina Verano, Malapatan Central Elementary School, Malapatan, Sarangani
 Delia Cornejo, Lun Padidu Elementary School, Malapatan, Sarangani
 Charlie Daguplo, Mama Nawa Elementary School, Malapatan, Sarangani
 Lenie Soriano, Pigkawayan Central Elementary School, Pigkawayan, Cotabato
 Nelida Castillo, Guinsang-an Elementary School, Sto. Nino, South Cotabato
 Alma Segura, J. Blanco Elementary School, Sto. Nino, South Cotabato
 Luz Huesca, Teresita Elementary School, Sto. Nino, South Cotabato
 Lornino Bergonio, New Iloilo Elementary School, Tantangan, South Cotabato
 Elena Seneca, Tantangan Central elementary School, Tantangan, South Cotabato
 Daisy Darroca, San Felipe Elementary School, Tantangan, South Cotabato

The management and coordination teams in ELSA Search for Outstanding Teachers in English, Science and Math in the ELSA sites covered of Region 12 are:

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 Zenaida T. Domingo, Ph. D., ELSA Project Director
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 Buenafe F. Quillope, NDMU Faculty Member
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 Mary Bien P. Catalan, NDMU Faculty Member
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 Corazon B. Fuentes, NDMU Faculty Member
 Jerwin A. Tampe, NDMU Faculty Member
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Lina Diaz de Rivera, Ph.D., Professorial Lecturer, De La Salle University Manila
Gutierrez A, Mangansakan, ELSA/IYF Monitoring and Evaluation specialist
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Coordination Team

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Gonzalo R. Rivera, Senior Manager, Ayala Foundations, ELSA IR1 Cluster 4 Manager
Nino Rocamora, ELSA/IYF Program Specialist
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Fely O. Ardina, NDMU Head, Finance and Support Services
Ms. Ivy D. Amar, EQuALLS2 IR2 Administrative Staff
Ms. Josephine M. Sulpico, EQuALLS2 IR2 Support Staff
Mrs. Luvismina E. Zaragoza Accountant, Finance and Support Services

**Technical Programs, Administrative, Finance, Documentation/Learning,
Outreach and Communication Team**

EDC Officers and Staff

Annex I

SEARCH FOR THE MOST INNOVATIVE CLASSROOM PRACTICES For EQuALLS- RECIPIENT MUNICIPALITIES AND DIVISIONS

1. The guidelines and criteria for the search are the following:

A. Guidelines

1. Only mentors with class advisory are qualified to be nominated by the school principal.
2. Selected mentors must submit success indicators, class program and MOVs to support their nomination in the division level.
3. The school principal must submit a recommendation letter to support the nomination of the qualified mentors.
4. There must be a school level selection for the search. Each school will have to come up with only three qualifiers: one English Mentor, One Science Mentor and one Mathematics Mentor.
5. After the school level selection, the District Heads shall validate the papers of the qualifiers and prepare a transmittal to the Division Office.
6. The Division Screening Committee composed of Assistant Schools Division Superintendent, ESM Supervisors, and EQuALLS Coordinator will select the best mentor for English, Science and Mathematics. These best mentors will be the awardees during the Culminating Activity in March 2011.

B. Criteria

1. Evidences of Success	75%
a. Number of mentees mentored	15%
b. Sample copies of pupils portfolio	15%
c. Best practice binder (a collection of success stories and best practices)	30%
d. Action research/ activity design/ Action plan conducted	15%
2. Linkages to stakeholders for sustainability of the project	20%
3. Personality Traits(interview based) -leadership skills, competence, competent	5%
	100%

Annex 2a

EQuALLS2 IR2 (CLUSTER 4) LEARNING FACILITATOR/MENTOR INFORMATION SHEET

NAME			
Address			
Contact Number		Email address	
Birth date		Birthplace	
Civil Status		Religion	
Name of Spouse		Number of Children	
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND			
Baccalaureate Degree	School	Year Graduated	Award/Scholarship (if any)
Graduate Degree	School	Year Graduated	Award/ Scholarship (if any)
WORK EXPERIENCE (start from the present position)			
School	Position	Number of Years	Grade level
Other Non-teaching Assignments in the last 3 yrs.			
AWARDS AND SPECIAL TRAININGS (last three years)			
ACTION RESEARCH AND SPECIAL PROJECTS (last three years)			

ADVOCACIES OR COMMUNITY EXTENSION ACTIVITIES				
EQUALLS2 TRAININGS ATTENDED (Please check)				
Area:	English []	Science []	Math []	
Core Trainings:	Phase 1 []	Phase 2 []	Phase 3 []	Mentoring []
	Refresher 1 []	Refresher 2 []	Refresher 3 []	
RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE TRAINING ++ (Specify if you were assigned as trainer, documenter, etc.)				
RESPONSIBILITIES/TASKS AS A LEARNING FACILITATOR. KINDLY GIVE PROVIDE THE FIELD VALIDATOR A COPY OF YOUR LPP MENTORING PLAN, SAMPLES OF MENTORING REPORTS AND OTHER MATERIALS ON YOUR MENTORING ACTIVITIES				

I certify that the above information is true and correct.

Signature of Nominee

Date:

IMPORTANT: Please prepare the important evidences (e.g. portfolio, photos, etc.) to support innovative classroom practice. These will be looked into by the field validators.

Annex 2b

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MENTORS

Name of Mentor _____ School _____

Name of Validator _____ Date _____

Direction: Learning Facilitators/Mentors are requested to write a narration ahead of the validation schedule to ensure a thorough and well-thought out report. They will use the guide questions below to write a 2 -3 page essay describing the innovative practice that they have implemented.

Your task is to validate and ask follow-up questions from learning facilitators/mentors to ensure that what they have written is true and complete. Clear, handwritten responses are acceptable. Use extra sheets please.

QUESTION	ANSWERS
Are you <u>actively</u> involved as a learning facilitator/mentor?	[] Yes [] No
If yes, describe your activities as a learning facilitator.	
What problems, gaps or challenges have you encountered as a classroom teacher and/or mentor? (This may be on instructional practices, teaching strategies, methods, student assesment, etc.)	
Describe the change strategy and tools that you have used to address/solve the problem or gap. Please be specific and thorough in describing the change strategy to respond to the problem, who are the beneficiaries, what are the milestones that indicated that the change is going as expected.	
What do you think makes your strategy different from what you and others have been doing? (e.g. <i>Is it innovative, cost-efficient, effective?</i>)	
What are your indicators of success? <i>Describe before and after the implementation. Give data if needed.</i>	
What are the facilitating (motivating/positive) factors?	
What are the hindering (negative) factors?	
How did the EQuALLSS 2 IR2 trainings help you in implementing this change strategy?	
How do you plan to sustain this change strategy/practice?	
What lessons/insights did you learn while implementing your change strategy?	

Annex 2c

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL HEAD/PRINCIPAL

Name of Principal _____ School _____

Name of Mentor Nominee _____ Date _____

Direction. Please write your answers legibly on the space provided. Use extra sheets if needed. Follow-up questions may be asked during the field validation.

QUESTION	ANSWERS
Are you actively involved as a learning leader in the EQ2 LPP ?	[] Yes [] No
If yes, describe your activities as a learning leader.	
How do you assess the mentor-nominee in terms of teaching performance, personality and attitudes or values?	
How would you assess the change strategy that your mentor- nominee has implemented? (<i>Specify the change strategy that the mentor/learning facilitator had identified in the interview</i>)	
What do you think makes this strategy different from what other teachers are doing? (Is it innovative, cost-efficient, effective?)	
What are the indicators of success that you observed? Describe before and after the implementation of this change strategy.	
How did the EQuALLS 2 IR2 trainings help your teacher-mentor (learning facilitator in implementing this change strategy?	
How will you sustain/continue the changes that you have implemented?	
What lessons/insights have you learned as a learning leader?	

Thank you very much!

Name and signature of Field Validator

Annex 2d

Name of Mentor _____ School _____
 Subject _____ Topic _____
 Name of Principal/Validator _____ Date _____

RUBRIC FOR TEACHING

(To be accomplished by Principal and Field Validator)

Domains	Poor (1)	Basic (2)	Exemplary (3)	Rating & Remarks
Knowledge of Subject Matter	Mentor demonstrates little knowledge of content	Mentor demonstrates adequate knowledge of content	Mentor demonstrates in-depth knowledge of content	
Planning and Preparation	Mentor shows little knowledge of pedagogy and the students. Instructional goals, resources and materials, and instructional design are loosely connected, ineffective or poorly adapted to student needs	Mentor demonstrates adequate knowledge of pedagogy and students. Instructional goals, resources and materials, and instructional design are all connected and somewhat adapted to the needs of the students	Mentor demonstrates in-depth knowledge of pedagogy and students. Instructional goals, resources and materials, and instructional design are tightly connected and highly effective and are well adapted to the needs of the students.	
The Classroom Environment	Interaction between students and between the Mentor and students are inappropriate and disrespectful. Classroom procedures and management of student behavior are vaguely defined, ineffective, or boring,	Interaction between students and between the Mentor and students are respectful. Classroom procedures are clear and student behavior is managed with little or no loss of instructional time. Physical	Interaction between students and between the Mentor and students are appropriate and respectful, with high expectations for learning. Classroom procedures are seamless and establish a challenging and dynamic environment for learning. Physical	

Domains	Poor (1)	Basic (2)	Exemplary (3)	Rating & Remarks
	contributing to a poor learning environment. Physical space is poorly or unsafely organized.	space is adequately organized to support learning.	space is skillfully and safely organized to support learning. Students themselves make substantive contribution to the smooth functioning of the classroom.	
Instruction	Students are uninvolved or only partially engaged in learning as a result of poor communication, low-level questions, little student participation in discussion, little feedback on learning, and the Mentor's rigid adherence to an instructional plan despite evidence that it should be modified.	Students are engaged in learning, as a result of clear communication, appropriate instructional strategies and materials/ equipment, and productive use of feedback. The Mentors demonstrate flexibility when contributing to the success of the lesson.	All students are highly engaged in learning, and make material contributions to the success of the class by asking questions and participating in the discussions, getting actively involved in learning activities, and using feedback in their learning. The Mentor ensures the success of every student by creating a high level learning environment, providing timely, high-quality feedback and continuously searching for approaches that meet students' needs.	
Mentor Personality	Mentor is nervous, has a low voice and cannot communicate clearly, mastery of the subject matter and medium of instruction were not evident, does not show openness to students' opinions and did not answer students' questions clearly.	Mentor manifested mastery of the subject matter, good communication skills, openness to students' opinions and explained in a manner that can be understood.	Mentor's expertise is highly evident as shown by mastery of the lesson, with composure, excellent command of the medium of instruction. Mentor clearly explained the lesson and welcomed students' opinions.	

Annex 2e

BEST INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OBSERVATION PROTOCOL EQuALLS2 IR2 Cluster 4

Notre Dame of Marbel University

School: _____

Name of Teacher/ Nominee	Identified Best Practice/s	Observation Field Notes (Indicators/Manifestations of Best Practices) <i>Use additional sheets if needed</i>	Reflection Field Notes (Insights, learning and meanings)

Name of Field Validator: _____ Date _____
(Signature over Printed Name)

