

DepEd Story**Illiteracy buster: The story of an unsung hero**

Heavy rains and the blazing sun are her companion. Distance and people are parts of her encounter. From the start, she has been shaping futures and fulfilling dreams.

In her 12 years of service, Alternative Learning System (ALS) Mobile Teacher Maria Rosario Landicho Banzuela has toiled to reach 20 barangays in Calamba City to teach out-of-school children and adults. She has filled community learning centers with hopes and dreams as she became her learners' lodestar and helped them achieve their ambitions.

For three years, Teacher Maria diligently educated inmates in the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP). During that period, she brought light to inmates who realized that their lives would be better with education.

Teacher Maria reaped the fruits of her labor when she was bestowed the Best Teacher Award in 2015, and the Most Outstanding Alternative Learning System (ALS) Mobile Teacher of 2016 in the 1st *Gawad Calambayan*. She got the same award in October 2017. She also bagged 1st place with the highest number of ALS Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) passers in the same year. She also ranked 2nd place in 2018. In 2019, she was hailed 1st place in the Division *Oplan Pagandahan ng Silid Aralan at Paaralan* in the 2nd *Gawad Calambayani*.

But for Teacher Maria, she counts her success not by the awards she received but by the smiles of the learners whom she helped fulfill their dreams. Her satisfaction is the life-changing decision of her learners to commit their time learning through ALS.

“She inspired and encouraged me to continue my study and reach my goals in life. With heart and perseverance, she instilled in our minds that life never stops in failure. Instead, she teaches us to be better people and to succeed in life. She was also one of my inspirations why I took BSEd [Bachelor of Secondary Education]. Without a doubt, she is one of those teachers who has a heart not just for teaching but for her learners who dream to achieve their aspiration,” mobile teacher and former ALS learner Jemuel Morato shared.

Ma. Jemima Rañoa, ALS passer in 2009, also shared her experiences with Teacher Maria: “She is so passionate in what she does. Her passion is strong and her profession is ignited by her love for work.”

“She is a charismatic educator who inspires her learners not only to dream but to reach that dream. As a colleague, she is adaptable and supportive,” said Wilmer Nombrado, Teacher Maria’s companion for years.

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By: *Jerick Laganzo Anas*
ALS Mobile Teacher
Division of Calamba City
Region IV-A CALABARZON

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