

## **CONFERENCE SYNTHESIS KARUNUNGAN FESTIVAL 2**

**“Celebrating the Teaching of Social Studies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”**

*Maria Montessori Hall, O. B. Montessori Center Inc. (OBMCI), Greenhills, San Juan*

*29-30 August 2008*

The Second Karunungan Festival held at OB Montessori Center in Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila celebrated the teaching of social studies for the 21st Century on the occasion of the 112th anniversary of our National Heroes Day last August 29-30, 2008 by advancing the cause of the “Schools of the People”, the theme of the First Karunungan Festival last year. It highlighted the various contexts, approaches and learning competencies in the current teaching of social studies and introduced the social studies framework of the Social and Human Sciences Committee of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines to the general public.

With the support of the Department of Education, the organization of the conference was guided by the intention of improving the teaching of social studies in the country through an aggregation of teaching practices that can be replicated and adapted to the various regions. Three hundred fifty delegates from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao attended and witnessed the presentations of various contexts, methodologies and learning competencies employed by thirty four speakers led by Ambassador Preciosa Soliven, Presidential Adviser on Education Mona Dumlaol-Valisno, Undersecretary Vilma Labrador, SHS Chair and UNESCO Commissioner Felice Sta. Maria, Dr. Erlinda Pefianco of SEAMEO-Innotech, Dr. Jose Abueva, President of Kalayaan College, and Emeritus Professor Wilfrido Villacorta of De la Salle University. A special presentation on the Teaching of Philosophy for Children by Prof. Ji-Aeh Lee of EWHA Woman's University in Seoul Korea was introduced as a highlight of the conference.

After a review of the current status of the teaching of social studies by the Department of Education's Education Program Specialist Dr. Thelma Cruz, Sherlyne Almonte-Acosta of De la Salle University and Florentino Hornedo, of the University of Sto. Tomas and the UNESCO National Commission, the different contexts of teaching and learning social studies (local, national, global, environmental, legal, historical, cosmological and virtual) were presented along with the many approaches to the subject matter such as indigenous, critical, creative, caring, artistic, alternative learning systems, judicious, problem-solving and teamwork induced methods were presented in order to highlight the learning competencies that are needed by our youth in coping with the challenges of the 21st Century. In summing up the conference proceedings, the Conference Director, Dr. Rainier Ibana, of the Human and Social Sciences Committee of the UNACOM, expressed the organizers' aspirations that these methods of teaching will eventually lead to the development of

our nation's participatory and sustainable future. Commissioner Felice Sta. Maria and Dr. Virginia Miralao concluded the event by challenging the participants with contemporary human and social studies concepts and articulated the conference's policy recommendations.

It was noted that social studies contribute to the formation and accumulation of social capital -- a staple ingredient that supports the stability of our local, national and global communities. The cultivation of a more deliberate social consciousness among our youth will lead our citizens' respect for due processes and protect the common will of our shared human and national heritage. The importance of formulating ecological standards of success was also highlighted in terms of integrating the social studies curriculum with the United Nations' declaration of Education for Sustainable Development. The Social and Human Sciences Committee of the UNESCO National Commission then offered itself, along with its allied organizations, as a resource arm for the Department of Education's curricular programs for social studies in order to give due recognition to the importance of social studies as an entry point of the human and social sciences to basic education and to emphasize its equal weight in relation to the current priorities of improving our pupils' learning competencies in Mathematics, Science and the English language. It was noted that the social dimension of our national development plans and strategies to support economic goals can be further enhanced by tapping into the available intellectual resources of the Philippine Social Science Council and the UNESCO National Commission and its network of concerned organizations and individual citizens.

Aside from the lively intellectual exchange engendered by the conference, exhibits were also displayed by the Center for Moderate Muslims, Adarna Books, Anvil Publishing, Ateneo de Manila University, the Blanco Family Academy, the Education Network, the National Historical Institute, the Popular Education for Peoples' Empowerment, Gary Granada's music, Libertas Foundation, and the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines.

Prepared by:

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