

the Americans.

Particularly engaging for the participants is the module on postsecondary options for the Deaf and the role of FSL. The lecturer, Philippine Deaf Resource Center (PDRC) Director Dr. Liza Martinez, outlined the much-lamented reality that Deaf students in the Philippines face. Very few educational institutions offer tertiary education for the Deaf - a reality that may be transformed when colleges and universities begin to appreciate and become open to the possibility of using FSL to bridge the gap between hearing educators and Deaf students.

A full morning's session was devoted to helping parents of the Deaf learn more about FSL and how using it at home to communicate with their Deaf children has a huge impact on the development of their children.

Conducted mainly in FSL, the two half-day sessions for Deaf students involved a deeper discussion of FSL and how it is used in different parts of the country by Deaf Filipinos. This is the first time that this particular lecture, titled "Introduction to Regional Variations of FSL," was presented to the public. It was based on the results of a comprehensive nationwide research done by the PFD and PDRC – the same research that serves as the backbone of the four-book series "An Introduction to Filipino Sign Language." Published by PDRC and PFD, this book series won a citation award from the 2005 Manila Critics Circle. A select number of participants were given complimentary copies of this ground-breaking publication.

The seminar series was a collaborative effort of DLS-CSB SDEAS, PDRC and PFD. It was sponsored by the Post Secondary Education Network-International (PEN-INTL) Philippines of DLS-CSB SDEAS. PEN-International Philippines is part of an international partnership of colleges and universities serving the postsecondary education needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The network is under the leadership of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf of Rochester Institute of Technology (USA) and is funded by the Nippon Foundation of Japan.

Founded in 1997, PFD is the national Deaf organization composed of 17 member Deaf organizations. It is the official Philippine representative and affiliated member of the the World Federation of the Deaf, an international advocacy body recognized by the United Nations.

PDRC, on the other hand, was founded in 2001 on three cornerstones: research, information and networking. This is rooted in the belief that research-based advocacy for, and by the Filipino Deaf community is key to its struggles.

PDRC and PFD have conducted several seminars on FSL in different parts of the country to advocate the use of FSL

among the Deaf and the hearing people who work with them.

Other featured lecturers were Deaf resource persons from PFD namely, Julius G. Andrada, Marites Racquel Estiller-Corpuz, Rafael Abat, Rommel L. Agravante, Yvette S. Apurado, Mary Jane B. Puson, Maricris Siloterio, and Rowella Tanjusay.

In terms of output and attendance, this seminar is truly a success for the Deaf community. CHED, TESDA, AMA University, Manila Science High School, Philippine Normal University, Philippine North Western University, Olongapo City National High School, DSWD, Philippine Catholic Organization of the Deaf, Saint Benedict School of Novaliches and various units and offices within DLS-CSB were well represented. Deaf students from SDEAS and other schools, along with their parents and other members of their families, eagerly supported the lectures.

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With the success of the FSL Seminar, and with the continuous efforts of the different organizations for the Deaf, the Deaf community hopes that the use of the FSL will continuously spread in the Philippines, further strengthening the identity and culture of the Filipino Deaf. Additional plans are being conducted for similar initiatives in the future. For interested individuals, organizations and schools please contact the following: DLS-CSB SDEAS PEN International Philippines at (632) 526-7441 local 239, PDRC at (632) 921-8521 and PFD at (632) 435-1198. Proposals for collaborative partnerships are welcome.

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