



**Students from Dr. Yanga Colleges Inc. in Bocaue, Bulacan show “Pnoy,” a tourist robot. □
(Photo by Jonjon Vicencio)**

BOCAUE, Bulacan — Pnoy, the three-foot robot assembled by high school students here, took center stage in the 7th World Robot Olympiad (WRO) and helped the all-Bulakenyo junior high school Philippine robotics team bag the gold medal at the conclusion of the two-day competition held in Pasay City last weekend.

Programmed as a linguist, Pnoy the robot wowed the crowd during the open category competition for junior high school students by speaking four languages, namely Spanish, English, Korean and Filipino, all of which are considered important to Filipinos and the country’s tourism industry.

Aside from this, Pnoy also played musical instruments and kissed the hands of older people, a known Filipino trait to show respect for the elderly.

The Bulacan team, composed of Adiel de Jesus, Ma. Nerrisa Nicolas, Ellaine Bulaclac, and sophomore Alexandra Guevarra, of the Dr. Yanga Colleges Inc. (DYCI), bested competitors from 22 other countries.

"This victory is a tribute to our country and to previous members of the DYCI team," said Edgar Yanga, executive vice president of the DYCI based in Barangay Wakas here.

Three other teams representing the country also made it to the top five of other categories in the WRO held at the SMX Convention Center.

The other teams came from the International School of Manila and Grace Christian Colleges High School which placed third and fourth, respectively, in the junior high school open category.

Tibagan National High School, on the other hand, bagged the silver medal in the regular category in the elementary competitions.

The DYCI Elementary team didn't make it to the finals.

The DYCI High School team placed ninth among 372 teams from 32 countries that competed in the WRO held in Pojang City, South Korea last year.

Yanga said the members of their team made a vow last year that they would not stop until they bag the gold medal.

"Their loss last year made them more determined, more focused; it was their inspiration and motivation to do better this year," he said.

The DYCI High School team earned the right to represent the country in the WRO junior high

school open category after they bagged top honors in the Philippine Robot Olympic (PRO) eliminations earlier this year.

Yanga also cited the creativity and perseverance of Filipino students who competed in the WRO.

"I tip my hat off to them because even if we have limited facilities, they never surrendered and I would say we are more creative and persistent," he said.

Now that the DYCI High School team bagged their dream gold medal, Yanga said it does not necessarily mean that they will stop.

He said they will continue to work harder in preparation for the WRO that will be held in the United Arab Emirates on Nov. 18 to 22 next year.

"This is just the beginning and we hope that our accomplishment will serve as inspiration to others to aim higher and never surrender," he said.

For his part, de Jesus, one of the members of the all-Bulakenyo junior high school robotics team, said he felt pressured during the competition.

"They had high expectations from us because we are the country's representative. But we just continued praying and remained focused on the competition," he said.

De Jesus said nothing is impossible for students from the provinces if they will only focus and work hard.

Like other members of the DYCI High School team, de Jesus competed in the WRO last year

where they placed ninth.

DYCI started its robotics program three years ago, and competed in the PRO and the WRO in the second and third year of the program.