

SUMMER SCHOOL? HOMEWORK? “AWESOME!”



In the fall, many kids are sad about returning to school after a summer of free time, family vacations, camps, and visits to the beach. Children in the Philippines who live in the mausoleums of a public cemetery are sad to see the end of a summer education program.

Three times a week, Ang Galing helps kids get ready for the start of school. “Ang Galing” means “Awesome” in Filipino. It’s a good name for a program that helps keep children in school when they are at risk of falling behind or dropping out altogether because of their families’ difficult lives. After an intensive summer program, Ang Galing returns during the school year for Saturday tutoring sessions.

You might think living in a public cemetery would be bleak and depressing. But a look at the video below shows people who are anything but gloomy or hopeless. The children here face a million challenges and have every reason to give up. Thanks to the Ang Galing program, their summers and their Saturdays during the school year are full of

excitement, friendship, and learning.

Ang Galing targets children ages 6-14 who haven't learned how to read and write and who have trouble attending school. The video makes it look easy. But behind the fun and smiles lies a carefully designed program adapted to encourage families living in the deepest poverty to participate. These families strain daily just to survive. People often criticize the parents for failing to ensure that their children go to school every day, or sometimes for failing to send their children to school at all. In fact, sometimes it is simply impossible for them to attend school.

ATD workers in the Philippines don't just set up an Ang Galing project in their center and wait for children to come. Many of the poorest families feel that such programs are not for them. They fear their children will be humiliated by their lack of education or the fact that they come from a cemetery. Instead, Ang Galing takes place right where they live. ATD workers visit families individually. By treating the parents with respect, they let them know that Ang Galing is a place where their children will not be made to feel ashamed or stupid.

At Ang Galing, the children learn basic reading and writing skills. Far more important, the sessions reinforce their self-confidence, motivating the child to embrace learning as fun. The Ang Galing program gives a child the chance to pace his or her own progress without the pressure to finish a lesson in every one-on-one tutorial session. Ang Galing tracks each child's progress and makes recommendations about what he or she needs to practice. Children get to pick their own tutors who receive notes and other helpful tips.

Parents and others in the community participate in the program as well. They make the program's educational materials by hand, invite children to attend the sessions, and help prepare food for children who participate. As in all ATD programs, Ang Galing shows that when a community works together with a focus on including everyone, extreme poverty can be overcome!



ATD Fourth World has been present in the Philippines for more than 25 years. [More information on our work in Asia.](#)

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