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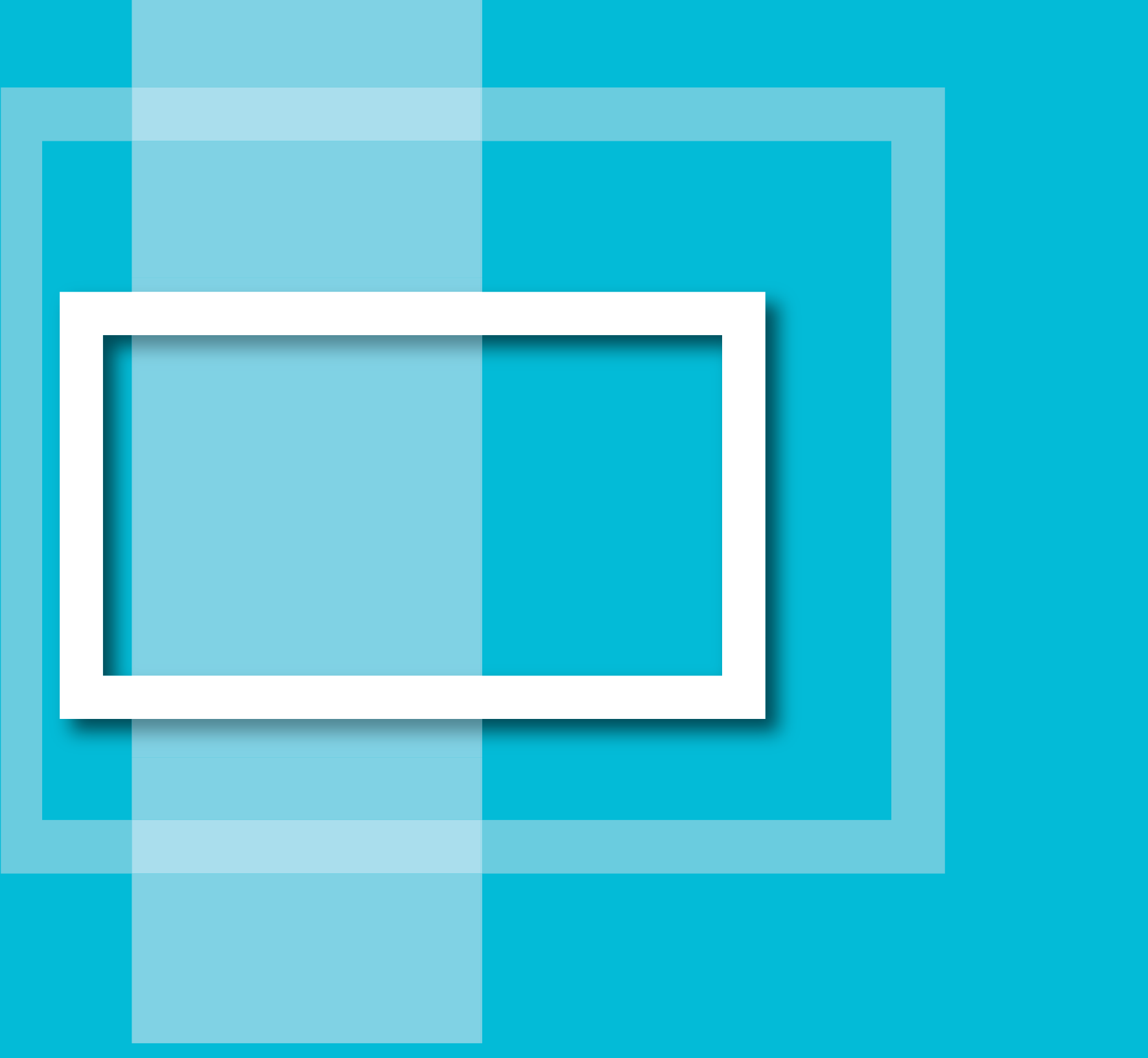
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Leadership stories from the field

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Leadership stories from the field



Why ‘stories from the field’?

Whenever I have the opportunity to travel outside Metro Manila, the first in my agenda would be to spend some time with DILG officers in the field. Apart from conversations about the Department’s key programs and overall directions, the *kwentuhan* would almost always veer to the “not-so-good”— key challenges our LGOOs face in the field, tensions between political pressure from clients and the demands of civil service neutrality and objectivity, and the range of conditions that impede motivation and good performance.

I listen. Then I ask myself why despite the seemingly long list of concerns that our people deal with in the field, they choose to stay. What is it that keeps people committed to the cause of good local governance? What makes them value their work in DILG?

These questions I reflected with much enthusiasm; This time, I wanted to focus on the positive stories from the field, without ignoring that there are challenges that need to be managed or addressed down there.

I did not send memos on this all over the country for DILG officials and MLGOOs to comply with. I did not impose deadlines. I did not provide a framework within which field people would have to respond. I did not offer incentives: no plaque, citation or trophy.

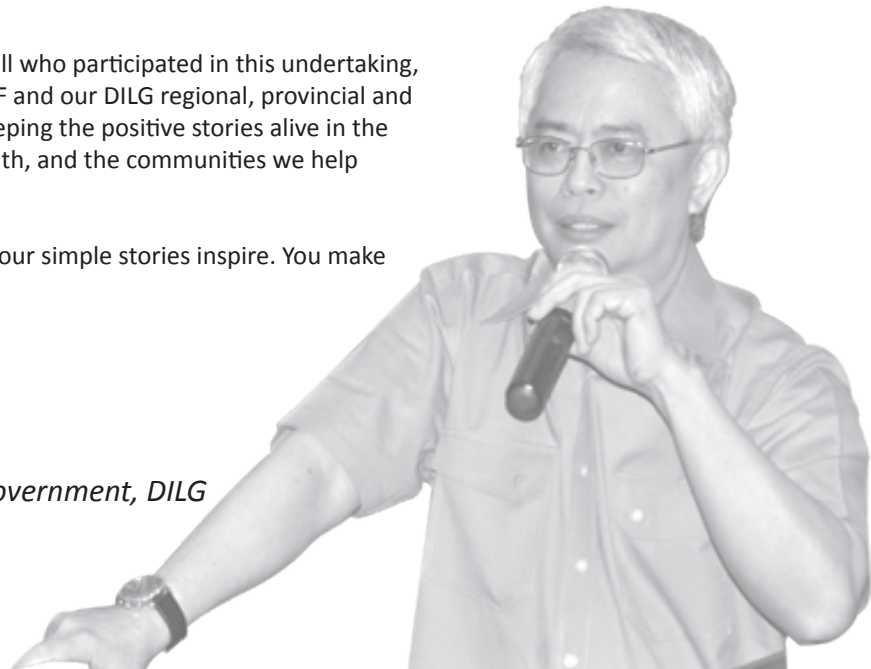
Instead, I asked the Philippines-Australia Human Resource and Organisational Development Facility (PAHRODF) to generate stories our field people are proud of. What is it that keeps them going?

Here, you will find stories that were shared by the field people about themselves. Here, they talk about things that matter to them. I was told there were quite a number of submissions from all over the country, for which I thank all. This means positive things abound in the field; that alone is comforting. Some stories may not appear here, but this does not mean they are excluded. It simply means that their stories will be shared in other fora or media.

I take this opportunity to thank all who participated in this undertaking, particularly AusAid and PAHRODF and our DILG regional, provincial and field offices. I look forward to keeping the positive stories alive in the Department, in LGUs we work with, and the communities we help transform.

To our DILG people in the field, your simple stories inspire. You make the Department proud.

Austere A. Panadero
Undersecretary for Local Government, DILG



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Working as DILG field officers



The soul of the Bohol Cluster is the team



Bohol is a class of its own. LGUs troop to this island in Central Visayas to learn from good practice. In 2012, the Provincial Government of Bohol and the Municipality of Maribojoc clinched Galing Pook Awards, two national distinctions for a small island province in the same year and among many national and regional awards for local governance reform and innovation.

Behind Bohol's accolades for good local governance are the workings of "invisible hands", influencing LGUs to comply with national standards and distinguish themselves in the field.

For every LGU in Bohol is a municipal local government operating officer (MLGOO). Behind every MLGOO is a cluster, a group of MLGOOs in neighboring LGUs, that have long been known as TACT Team, short for Team Approach to Coordinated Tasks.

What distinguishes Bohol Clusters is the barkadahan, the bond of friendships among MLGOOs, that makes DILG work more fun, explains Provincial Director Ma. Loisella Lucino of DILG Bohol, or Wella among peers and co-workers.

The cluster members move from one LGU to another, paying courtesy calls to local chief executives (LCEs) and updating them about innovations in other LGUs, with a healthy nudge to do the same or exceed local benchmarks.

The approach pays off. The usual LGU response is to replicate or do better, says PD Wella, and those who see difficulty in complying with DILG programs find themselves more open and obliging, especially after the Cluster team appeals to LCEs: *kung kaya nilang gawin, Mayor, kakayanin din natin dito!*



LGUs are likely to respond positively when the Cluster introduces a program, compared to leaving the MLGOO by himself or herself to do it, says PD Wella. The team approach keeps the LGU engaged with DILG programs and also helps insulate MLGOOs from political influence.

It helps that the team has a long history of friendships and initiative. Bohol has D'One and M&M Clusters with their own Facebook group accounts to share updates on DILG programs and maintain social relationships. Both have vision-mission statements, Cluster plans, and a group cheer. They meet twice a month and have instituted a buddy system to pursue targets and hurdle milestones together.

If LGUs in Bohol thrive in good practice, so do Clusters of MLGOOs. That's why Bohol Clusters have always been the most awarded in the region.

The reason is not rocket science: It is no longer work, when it is fun in the team and you love what you're doing, PD Wella exclaimed. What makes the Bohol Clusters distinctive is team spirit. They enjoy doing things together with LGUs in the province.

This makes a lot of difference in Bohol.

'I in them' and 'one of us' in Camiguin



I have received my appointment as the Provincial Director of Camiguin Island rather recently, says Bruce Colao, and huge challenges welcomed me in DILG. The first few months was spent observing and taking stock of the behaviors and competencies of the team in DILG Camiguin and assessing the reception of local functionaries to the Department, PD Colao recalled.

Tough was how Bruce described his initial stint as PD. At the local front, LGU officials seemed to have low regard for the DILG team. Within the team, the PD singled out issues of internal cohesion and self-esteem.

The way out, he said, was to bridge the Department to the LGUs, using an 'I in them' approach, given that the PD was himself a former vice mayor. Another was to heighten team spirit and individual confidence in the provincial office, a 'one of us' approach to set off a DILG-Camiguin that is one in mind, heart, and action.

Taking cue from the above, the PD started changes in the workplace. The most basic was to improve communication to improve relationships, develop people's gifts, and enhance client expectations.

We held a number of learning sessions for the team of MLGOOs in Camiguin, he shared, where all were encouraged to offer new ideas and suggestions, share information, and reflect on experiences and lessons in Camiguin.

We listened to each other. We acknowledged each one's thoughts and insights. This was our platform for building trust and for opening doors of collaboration within the DILG team.

The open discussions exposed our mental models, PD Colao said, and generated common ground rather than division, and where we seemed to disagree internally, we parked issues and realized that with diversity comes the value of respect. As we began to build our confidence and trust with each other, we agreed on solutions and adopted new work approaches within the team, he shared.

One new work approach was to hold Roving Conferences with LGU officials and functionaries. The team moved from one LGU to another in Camiguin, in lieu of the traditional Provincial Office regular conferences, to expose DILG technical and administrative staff to LGU officials and functionaries, and other community leaders.

It was not only an LGU visit, but also a courtesy call to our clients and a show of unity by the DILG team. After all, as we continue to demonstrate respect for diversity in the DILG team, we also want to demonstrate our deep respect to LGUs, says PD Bruce.

And the fruits of teamwork and internal cohesion are beginning to show in the province. Camiguin bagged the Regional Gawad Pamana ng Lahi for 2012 and emerged as one of the national finalists. In addition, one of the team members, Cluster Leader Ma. Jo Charisse C. Montaus, made it to the pool of Career Executive Service eligibles.

There is no turning back for Camiguin as it is beginning to reap the fruits of working together as a team and working hand-in-hand with LGUs.



Rediscovering the value of performance management in Agusan del Sur



The Provincial Government of Agusan del Sur takes pride in having a Human Resource Development (HRD) Plan that programs the capacity and competency improvements to be put in place to support the overall strategic directions of the province in the medium-term.

For 2010-2013, it has also produced an Executive-Legislative Agenda (ELA) that harmonized the priorities of the governor and the provincial council.

These two documents are strategic in nature, thanks to the assistance of AusAID; but more so because of the advocacy of the DILG Agusan del Sur to use the results of the Local Government Performance Management System (LGPMS) to inform the ELA and HRD Plan.

During my initial interaction with local officials in Agusan del Sur, I found out that LGPMS results were produced for compliance's sake, PD Arleen Ann Sanchez admitted. The LGPMS was not utilized as it should have been.

The DILG team used the participation of the province in an AusAid intervention assistance to deepen the appreciation of the LGPMS to inform direction-setting and strategic thinking in the LGU.

The LGPMS process was explained to the department heads and local officials, especially the provincial governor, emphasizing the value of the LGPMS results in local policymaking, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation was emphasized.

With the minimal manpower of DILG-Agusan del Sur, the team opted for multi-tasking to assist the provincial government in imbuing the ELA and HRD planning exercises with an LGPMS lens, linking performance areas with the strategic choices of the provincial government for local development and capacity enhancement.

Making ourselves available to the LGU was a big factor in maintaining good relations with them and getting their support for DILG's programs, confides PD Sanchez.

As the provincial government has undergone two strategic exercises with the use of the LGPMS, Agusan del Sur has gone beyond compliance and discovered the value of the assessment findings to determine informed baselines.

We knew where we were at, said PD Sanchez, referring to LGPMS results, and this marked where we want to depart in the provincial government's trajectory into the future.

Agusan del Sur is now poised to move forward.



Change is good in Iloilo City

Lawyer Ferdinand Panes remembers when he was the newly-assigned DILG director in Iloilo City, he was reluctant because most local officials were also new and not familiar with the programs and advocacies of the Department.

Whoever said that change was good did not know what he or she was talking about, the City Director (CD) justified at the outset. He felt a degree of skepticism about LGU support to DILG's priorities and nurtured personal resistance to his new assignment.

But there was no way he could back out from the new area of assignment. He had to make good where his superiors placed him. It was futile to resist and more prudent to embrace the new post. After all, CD Panes believed that it was a losing proposition to focus on negative thoughts that would make it more difficult to transform Iloilo City, and more healthy to shift his energies to things that excited him.

Change the mindset and the expectations and feelings also change, he remembered.



And CD Panes went from one meeting to another introducing himself and the Department to the city government and its barangays. From one building block to another, he unveiled the programs of the Department and offered himself to work with others in the LGU.

I could never go wrong by involving LGU officials and functionaries, he shared, especially if this opens communication channels to formal and informal groups in the LGU that matter in facilitating shared understanding and common ground on LGU reforms.

Regular meetings with the city mayor and other officials also deepened social bonds and friendships that built trust. It was easier, he recalled in hindsight, to win over the city and barangay governments on advocacies of good housekeeping, full disclosure and transparency, and local performance management when there is a personal touch, in addition to the usual rigors of professionalism, competence, and integrity.



One can always invoke the Department's authority in the exercise of general supervision over LGUs, but it is culturally apt not to lose sight of the power of human relations, especially that Filipinos value empathy over rationality.

Working with stakeholders is not an easy task, he said, but with the right approaches in consulting, negotiating, and assisting city and barangay governments in Iloilo, there is wide latitude for broadening alliances and seeking shared solutions.

And the evidence in Iloilo City has so far been sterling: regional awardee for Gawad Pamana ng Lahi for two consecutive years (2011-2012) and a national finalist alongside with the cities of Makati, Palawan and Vigan. Likewise, it is a Galing Pook winner in 2013 and a Red Orchid Awardee for two consecutive years (2012-2013).

Now, CD Panes has full reason to believe that change is indeed good.







Working with others



Engaging business, government to keep competitiveness up in Laguna



Heavy traffic slows down production. Business, as a return, suffers from high production costs, less earnings, stymied expansion, and less employment.

This sums up heavy traffic as a complex issue in Laguna, leading to a loop of causes and effects that redound to competitiveness issues in the province.

Yazaki-Torres, one of the leading manufacturers in Laguna, raised to the DILG the traffic gridlock along six kilometers in Maharlika Highway. The traffic snarl stretches from Barangay Turbina, Tulo and Makiling, Calamba City, Laguna up to the boundary of Sto. Tomas, Batangas, hurting the competitiveness of industries in the province.

Along this strip, the flow of vehicles slows down to a snail's pace. Commuters pray to high heavens to stretch their patience as a result of heavy traffic caused by *tricycles* and *pedicabs*. In addition, illegal sidewalk vendors in front of Carmelray Industrial Park occupied road margins, choking the flow of traffic and contributing to high congestion.



This complex issue required collaboration from all stakeholders. Easing the flow of traffic along the Maharlika necessitated political and administrative will on the part of the local and national government, as well as some counterpart resources from the private sector.

The roles and responsibilities of each partner were spelled out and coordinated under an inter-agency and multi-sectoral program led by DILG with the city government of Calamba as local partner. DOTC-LTO was responsible for traffic enforcement, while DPWH widened roads and removed obstructions. DTI and PEZA focused on private sector concerns. Meanwhile the private sector contributed resources to the overall efforts. Yazaki Torres, for example, donated a vehicle to the LGU to be used to patrol the area, among other purposes.

PD Lionel Dalope of DILG-Laguna chaired the Executive Committee, which is the central monitor behind the faithful adherence of all parties concerned to their respective commitments.

Since this is a big issue involving different agencies and the private sector, it was important for us to coordinate as much as to communicate with one another, says PD Dalope.

And the results are felt: Traffic along Maharlika Highway has eased. Illegal obstructions along road shoulders and gutters were cleared. *Tricycles* and *pedicabs* have been designated with plying routes to minimize access to the Maharlika Highway. And businesses and commuters are happy.

In a community issue affecting various stakeholders, it is important to involve all parties concerned and agree on common solutions and clear commitments, reflects PD Dalope. Everyone has a role to play in solving the complex issue, he said.

And one significant commitment is for key stakeholders from the government and the private sector to continue working together in monitoring and evaluating the program to sustain the gains of light traffic and keep businesses competitive in Laguna.

Dipping into the depths of social capital in Isabela



There is always a demand for improving capacities. However, except for learning-on-the-job and occasional mentoring in government, there is not much opportunity to systematically learn to support strategic directions.

Take disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM), and climate change adaptation (CCA), for example. These are highly technical and specialized knowledge areas. Who would have all these competencies to influence the scope and quality of comprehensive local development planning?

Not the staff of DILG-Isabela—at least, initially.



How would local development programs and projects be rights-based, gender-fair, and pro-poor, while reducing or mitigating disaster risks? Big question with nebulous concepts and no operational content, DILG staff would insist.

But for PD Elpidio A. Durwin of DILG-Isabela, the thirst for improving capacities and competencies on DRRM/CCA in the Department has to be quenched—not through the usual training stream from internal budgets, which were always not enough—but by looking into reservoirs of resources from partners.

That partner, UN Habitat, came at the right time.



UN Habitat assisted selected cities in Cagayan Valley in 2011. But beyond these cities, other LGUs and DILG-Isabela itself, needed to learn DRRM/CCA as well. DILG cannot be left behind in these knowledge areas, because a blind person cannot lead another blind person, reasoned PD Durwin.

And so the idea was broached to UN Habitat: how about training LGU officials and staff, multi-sectoral representatives, and DILG personnel on making comprehensive development plans (CDPs) DRRM/CCA-responsive, rights-based, pro-poor, and gender-sensitive?

With a concept note prepared by Ruperto Maribbay, then a Cluster Leader in DILG Isabela and overall resource person on CDPs, UN HABITAT approved the proposal and provided counterpart funds to train 140 participants from LGUs, civil society and DILG in 2011.

Now LGU and DILG staff in Isabela are demonstrating initial seeds of competency, producing vulnerability and adaptation analyses (VAA) based on sex-disaggregated data; and generating appropriate 3-year strategies, programs and projects, as well as local indicators to track success, progress and risks.

And what triggered this? Just good relationships with UN Habitat, backed with good reputation from DILG, reasonable demand from LGUs, and a dose of optimism, creativity and persistence, ends PD Durwin.

Bayanihan in Caloocan: Discovering the *bayani* in everyone



Tanigue Creek was swimming with litter. It smelled of urban decay. It was dead, but occasionally rises to life engulfing communities with flood water and debris.

This was the cycle of a dead creek haunting. It comes back to life with swollen waters and gets back at people. And the communities along Tanigue Creek in Caloocan City have had enough.

For Atty. Vedasto Bassi, city director of DILG-Caloocan, there's got to be a way out of this complex issue. *Lilinisin natin ang Tanigue Creek, hindi dahil utos ito ng kataas-taasang Korte Suprema, kundi dahil ito ay para sa ikagaganda ng ating kapiligaran, ikabubuti ng ating kalusugan, at lalung-lalo na sa kaligtasan ng ating mga mahal sa buhay mula sa pinsalang dala ng baha*, the city director exhorted.

Atty. Bassi recognized immediately that resurrecting the creek meant restoring the community spirit of the barangays it traversed. The situation compelled barangay officials, residents, and various stakeholders to own the social challenge and commit to a Tanigue Clean-up project.

DILG was faced with a leadership challenge: to win the hearts and minds of the community leaders and residents to revive Tanigue Creek. The city director and his team brought together five barangays, the Caloocan City Government, the MMDA, the military, DPWH and DILG in a revival of community spirit. It was *bayanihan*, Caloocan style.

The community agreed to implement Project URGENT, short for Unite, Rehabilitate, Guard, and Ensure the Naturalism of Tanigue Waterway. The project mobilized community resources and built local capacities to rehabilitate the creek. CD Vedasto quipped, we appealed to their sense of community and alliances have been built among the City Government of Caloocan through the Environmental Sanitation Services (ESS), Archdiocese of Kalookan, MMDA, TWG-Inter-Coastal Management Team (MBCRP), and concerned *Punong Barangays*.



The result was an outpouring of commitments from local stakeholders covering human services, supplies, tools and equipment for the clean-up drive, shared CD Vedasto. The group moved from one barangay to another holding assemblies to communicate with community residents and enlist their support.

To ensure sustainability, Barangay Creek Team Members were organized comprising at least ten members per barangay. They acted as environmental police and were trained by MMDA Resource Persons. Soon, they will be deputized as 'creek guards or guardians' by the MMDA to oversee community discipline and commitment to keep the creek clean.

Asked what the achievements of the community are so far, PD Vedasto quickly pointed out the institutional approach, community collaboration, efficient communication to generate common understanding, and harmonious relationships among the residents and barangay officials.

All stakeholders are now cooperating under the *bayanihan* system. There was no time for fault-finding, he added, as there was much to be done.

That's the heart of unleashing the *bayani* in everyone in Caloocan.



Creative *Lupon*, meaningful results in Capiz

PD Helen Mestidio of DILG-Capiz has lots of stories to share about transforming relationships with LGUs in the province. But one story stands out in Barangay Bailan in the Municipality of Pontevedra.

In this part of the town, community disputes are settled not in the heat of confrontation, but through creative mediation and conciliation under the auspices of the *Lupong Tagapamayapa*.

We have a lot to offer other barangays in the Philippines based on the experience of the *Lupon* in Bailan, the PD shared, mostly increasing the reputation value of the *Lupon* and keeping the parties fully engaged in addressing disputes.

Unique ways have evolved from the *Lupon* experience in Bailan. It takes pride in settling 100% of all disputes filed at the barangay level. But what makes this peculiar is the extraordinary means by which the community manages dispute among residents.

First, the members of the *Lupon* are all respected members of the community, particularly coming from the roster of *maestros* and *maestras* in the barangay. The high credibility of, and years of experience by, educators and school administrators were put to good use in their work as *Lupon* members and conciliators. Their unparalleled roles and services paved the way to make the *Lupon* one of the most valuable social and political institutions in the barangay, as well as in Pontevedra and in Capiz.



Second, the settlement approach of Bailan is also one of a kind. To ensure full attendance by all parties concerned during conciliation meetings, the services of a barangay patrol vehicle are made available to and from the venue.

The *Lupon* has innovated through the Plant-a-Tree mechanism, where a respondent is asked to literally plant a tree as a gesture of redress and commitment to reform. Not only is the act pro-environment, it is also symbolic of willingness to make amends and start anew.

This approach, says PD Mestidio, has resulted in zero recurrence of cases settled. The tree will always be a reminder that parties concerned have moved on.

And such meaningful results have not gone unnoticed. Barangay Bailan went on to become national winners twice in a row. In 2010, it was awarded the most outstanding *Lupon* in the Philippines. The next year it placed second, a testament to the *Lupon's* innovation and outcomes.

Today the Provincial Director looks back with much appreciation. Bailan has set the mark that the community can do so much based on its own reservoir of reputation, commitment, and creativity.

The example of Bailan is unique, adds PD Mestidio, but it can be done anywhere in the Philippines.



Nang lumiwanag ang Sapang Liwanag: **big businesses join hands to revive dying creek in Pasig**

DILG Cluster Leader Merce Tuico is transferring from Pasig City to San Juan City beaming with newfound confidence working with big business.

I've learned a lot from my experience in DILG tapping business establishments for community causes and I intend to use this when I move to highly urbanized San Juan, vowed the lady Cluster Leader.

Merce was well-aware that all waterways in the metro flow into Manila Bay and had to be cleaned up. *Kasi kahit na anong linis ang gawin nila sa Manila Bay kung patuloy ang dating ng basura galing sa mga sapa, walang mangyayari sa Manila Bay at Pasig River*, she reasoned.

Merce knows exactly where she is coming from. Early on, DILG pushed for the clean-up of a creek in Pasig City that flows into the Pasig and Marikina Rivers.

When we inspected the waterways of Pasig City, said City Director (CD) Jay Timbreza, we found out that *Sapang Liwanag* stretched along an industrialized area and was clearly polluted and clogged with garbage. The stench coming from the creek smelled of its impending death. Something had to be done about it quickly, CD Jay added.

The City Director realized that proposals for funding would take some time to develop and get approved. The first thing that came to mind was to tap resources swiftly to revive the dying *Sapang Liwanag*. The DILG cluster buckled down to work.



Merce donned on her street clothes and interviewed residents and officials of Barangay San Miguel. There she learned that three large establishments nested on the riverbanks—Super Globe, which is a manufacturer of paint chemicals; East Raya Condominium, and a large food processing plant.

The tricky part was getting the three firms to agree to an inspection. They refused to cooperate at first, wary about privacy and security. They also feared that government fact-finding would lead to fault-finding and blame.

We dialogued with them to show that the DILG and other stakeholders were serious in wanting to become partners in restoring the waterways, explained Cluster Leader Merce.

They agreed. The DILG team inspected the facilities and singled out the source of the foul smell from the creek. The meetings built trust and paved way for solution-seeking behaviors from everyone, rather than fomenting blame. As a result, a memorandum of agreement (MOA) was forged for *Sapang Liwanag*.

It took six months to organize and build the community from DILG, the barangay, the *Punong Barangay* of San Miguel, and the city government. Together, they pooled manpower, supplies, money, dump trucks, rubber boats, and cleaning implements to de-clog the creek.

Although faced with no funds, CD Jay Timbreza and his DILG Team generated resources from the community most affected by the poor conditions of *Sapang Liwanag*. Today, the creek is regularly being cleaned by the community.

I learned how to develop positive relationships in the community, says Merce Tuico. Shared understanding of a complex issue precedes commitment. Resources come after the heart is compelled, she ended.

Now, *Sapang Liwanag* is alive and clean.







Creating new social arrangements

Novel ways of IP representation in local *sanggunian* up in Mountain Province



How does one ensure representation of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in local communities whose elected officials are all IPs?

That's the paradox facing the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) in complying with the representation of IPs in the *Sangguniang Bayan* (SB) and *Panlalawigan* (SP) as mandated by the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) or Republic Act 8371.

Local governments in CAR have long refused additional IP representation in local councils for various reasons. Foremost is that SB and SP members are themselves all IPs, so why need additional representation? There is also the issue of administrative cost of having additional salaries and program funds, which would exert pressure on the budgets of LGUs, especially among those in the 4th to 5th income classes.

It also does not help that local officials spend time and resources to get elected, whereas IP representatives do not. And finally, there are a number of civil society organizations, also composed of IPs, that already involve themselves in the affairs of local governance.



But until Congress addresses the legal paradox in the case of IP representation, PD Anthony Ballug does not intend to ignore the law and arrogate unto his hands the discretion of implementation.

I recognize the strong resistance from local officials to have additional IP representation in the municipal, city and provincial councils, PD Ballug said, but the legal remedy is beyond the Department. There has to be a creative way of addressing this complex issue, he added.

The PD held formal and informal meetings with LGU officials, together with MLGOOs and representatives from the provincial office of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), and took note of the points of contestation.

Instead of addressing these points and clashing with LGU officials, the DILG team explained the benefits of compliance and the implications to the good housekeeping standing of LGUs in the province.

The IP representation is required by law and forms part of the seal of good housekeeping criteria of the Department, PD Ballug emphasized. Without this seal being conferred, the LGU will not be able to access financial incentives from the national government, including DILG's Performance Challenge Fund, loans from the Bureau of Local Government Finance, program and funds assistance from the PAMANA (*Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan*) initiative of the Office of the President, water grants for waterless communities, and additional funds for local roads, among others.

PD Ballug then focused on the issue of salaries of IP representatives.

The Provincial Director appealed instead to IPs in the community, particularly those who are highly respected and with high ascendancy based on cultural and ethnic norms, to consider being an IP representative in local councils sans salary but with huge responsibility to elevate the causes of IP communities. I appealed to their sense of mission and commitment to the IPs in general, he stressed.

The call was heeded and the LGUs did not refuse.

Ten municipalities and the provincial government in the Mountain Province finally had IP representatives in the SB and SP by the first quarter of 2013. In addition, all 144 barangays have selected their own IP representatives.

For PD Ballug, where LGUs seem to have been stalled by issues of finances in complying with IP representation in local councils, they have chosen to rise up after the Department appealed to their sense of mission to the cause of IPs.

At the end of the day, all of us are IPs who decided foremost to focus on our cultural well-being, rather than allow ourselves to be divided by narrow interests, he ended.



Garbage is opportunity in Pasay: how Cutcut Creek was saved



In Pasay City, garbage finds itself into the hands of entrepreneurs, rather than into the depths of waterways, just very recently. This is the story of how Cutcut Creek was saved from debris and pollution and how community behaviors changed.

The Cutcut Creek Clean-Up project is not a new activity. It was, in fact, a previous initiative assisted by an international development partner that failed. But DILG's Luisa Echavia intended to succeed. She knew that transformative leadership was required for communities to have a shared understanding of their complex issues and generate creative strategies.

City Director Echavia said that the Cutcut creek clean-up was a complex social mobilization activity led by DILG, as imposed by the Supreme Court. Garbage and waste from the barangays were being dumped into waterways. This has resulted to flooding and environmental degradation of Cutcut Creek that traverses Barangay 193 in Pasay City.

Nanganganak ang mga concerns, the lady city director said, pero lahat ng lumalabas na problema, we treat as opportunities.

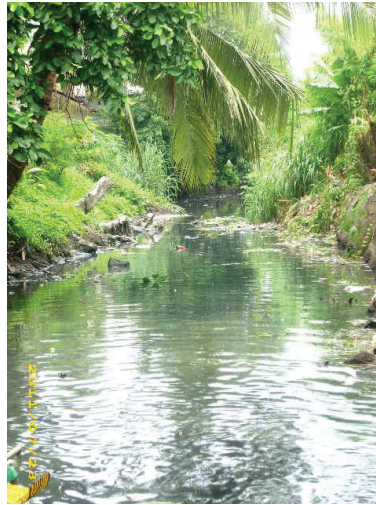
The DILG and barangay leadership involved the community, particularly barangay officials, youth leaders and organizations, out-of-school residents, junkshop owners, and the City Solid Waste Management Office, in addressing the complex issue. A Barangay Ecological Solid Waste Management Committee was formed to deal with program implementation.

The first clean-up activity was a success. The community residents soaked their bodies wet to de-clog and clean the waterways. As a result of the initial collaboration in July 2011, about three tons of debris, 180 sacks of garbage, and 28 sacks of construction materials were fished out from Cutcut Creek.

Today, the clean-up drive is done twice a month by the barangay in partnership with the community and other stakeholders. Community awareness programs were also pursued to complement efforts to de-clog the creek. These included house-to-house visits, reminders for residents to do their share in community cleanliness, and putting up signages in strategic areas containing information on waste segregation and schedule of garbage collections for biodegradable and non-biodegradable materials.

The mounting volume of garbage collected from the community served as an opportunity to generate additional income for the barangay. An arrangement was made with a junk shop owner to collect the segregated trash that can still be recycled.

Bag-making from recycled plastic was also pursued. Local NGOs trained community members and provided seed money for starting small enterprises.



The barangay also requested for a daily garbage collection and an additional smaller garbage truck that can enter small alleys, which encouraged households to take their garbage out and not to throw them in waterways.

The change in community behaviors produced meaningful results.

The community did not experience severe flooding at the height of the tropical storms in 2012. It also had a positive effect on the health of the community, especially those living along the creek. In addition, community participation is more evident unlike before, when the only ones doing their share in maintaining the cleanliness of Cutcut Creek were the residents living beside the creek.

More than saving Cutcut Creek, however, the initiative changed the community first. Everyone contributed to the community problem then. Now, everyone is part of the solution.



The shift started with the mindset. We decided to focus more on the opportunity, rather than being sidelined and weakened by the magnitude of the challenge facing the community, CD Echavia stressed.

She explained: If we only see the garbage in the creek, then we will forever de-clog and remove the debris. We chose to look as well on what needed to be done with household garbage that might be thrown into the creek. And so we came up with income opportunities from garbage collection, segregation, recycling, and livelihood.

That was the first meaningful change—to frame the challenge of the community as an opportunity. This set off a different approach and a chain reaction of meaningful outcomes.

The heart of Marinduque is peace

For the people of Marinduque, what matters most is that they live in peace. And for an island province that is a hub for the movement of people and goods, community cooperation is key to keeping the island safe.

Marinduque has been declared insurgency-free. But this is not enough. The challenge is in keeping the island paradise out of trouble and ensuring that the people are out of harm's way.

And for this to happen, inter-agency partnerships are essential to ensuring peaceful communities. Public safety is everyone's concern here.

Beyond agency compliance is an investment of time, effort, and commitment, says PD Ma. Victoria Del Rosario of DILG-Marinduque, as well as a dose of official and personal relationships nurtured over the years.



DILG cannot do its mandate alone, she added, and needs to tap other agencies to keep communities safe in Marinduque. Indeed, help she got from others—and with high enthusiasm and expertise!



From the Integrated Bar of the Philippines-Marinduque Chapter came the pro bono services to train the *Lupong Tagapamayapa* in mediation and amicable settlement.

With the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), anti-drug abuse campaigns in all municipalities and barangays of Marinduque were intensified.

To keep schools safe, DILG and the Bureau of Fire Protection worked with the Department of Education on the findings of the annual fire vulnerability assessment, based on the requirements of the Fire Code, and to institute preventive and corrective fire safety measures in public elementary and high schools.

With the of the Highway Patrol Group, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, and Land Transportation Office, public safety concerns were dealt with, such as the use of helmets when driving and riding motorcycles, prevention and/or detection of criminality in the community, and organizing colorum vans into cooperatives.

Indeed, DILG-Marinduque may have limited financial resources to respond to peace and order and public safety priorities, but for PD del Rosario, the resources are out there to seize.

Agencies were willing to help, and the only thing she did was to ask.

Data, determination and drive: pushing for gender-based transformations in Mandaue City



City Director (CD) Jhoaden G. Lucero faced a grim reality that barangays in Mandaue would have very low compliance in the Barangay Governance Performance Management System (BGPMS) audits. The feedback was that it was too technical and time-consuming an exercise to assess the levels of barangay performance in the areas of governance, administration, social services, economic development, and environment.

The BGPMS results, however, were very important for DILG to find out the state-of-barangay governance and the community-level concerns that need to be prioritized.



It was non-negotiable to get all barangays to participate in the BGPMS, CD Lucero reasoned. Without village-level data, the city government's programs and the DILG's advocacies would not be as informed. There has to be a creative way of getting barangays to comply, she intoned.

The opportunity presented itself through incentives.

With the full support of the City's Gender and Development (GAD) Council, The GenRe Award: A Search for the Most Gender Responsive (GenRe) Barangay was conceptualized and launched in 2011 offering incentives to barangays with the most gender-responsive program.



CD Jao convinced the Council to use the BGPMS as a filter in identifying and recognizing barangays with the most gender, responsive programs. Determined to see the vision unfold into reality, the DILG team comprising CD Jao and members Rothwel Pulido and Reynaldo Sosmeña started the arduous task of getting all 27 barangays of Mandaue City BGPMS-compliant.

The BGPMS was presented to all barangay officials and Committees were created in each barangay. Committee secretaries were also trained how to fill out the instrument and later convert the data into a State of Barangay Governance Report (SBGR).

It was a win-win arrangement: DILG was able to generate 100% compliance in the BGPMS and the GAD Council was able to extract rich barangay-level data on the status of women and children covering maternal and child health and nutrition, newborn screening, immunization and micro-nutrient supplementation, and children in conflict with the law.

As a result of BGPMS data in Mandaue City, additional gender-based activities and advocacies ensued. Barangay assemblies were convened to discuss the law against human trafficking (i.e. Republic Act [RA] 9208 or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003) and some barangays saw the need to pass local ordinances against human trafficking and creating village-level GAD focal points.

Women groups also benefited from awareness and skills-building on women and children's rights under RA 9262 or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004. As a result, 14 barangays created Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPC), an institution promoting child protection, rights, and well-being.

CD Jao has triggered a series of inter-linked advocacies. First was the value of barangay-level information through the BGPMS. Next was the importance of collaboration with internal champions, such as the GAD Council, and the use of incentives to generate full compliance at the barangay level. And finally, using data to drive further gender-based advocacies in the city.

On hindsight, five barangays received the GenRe Awards in 2012 and the cash incentives accompanying the recognition. But the overall winner was Mandaue City for amassing a wealth of barangay-level data to be used for city-wide programs and projects.

And this will redound to the benefit of women, children, and men of Mandaue City. The platform for gender-fair service delivery in the city is born.

DILG-NCR ops up in the cloud

Cloud or nothing.

For DILG-NCR, there's no turning back—the only option is to look forward and innovate how regional operations are managed. The office has decided to go virtual. There is no other way but to efficiently manage information systems and working relations up there in the cloud.

Assistant Regional Director (ARD) Maria Lourdes L. Agustin described the situation facing DILG-NCR then: The old ways of doing things no longer worked. The office was increasingly getting cramped with cabinets and shelves, and files often got lost. We had created mountains and valleys of folders and papers, and drowned in the depths of aging files and documents.

The office was also increasingly becoming a fire hazard and a health risk, especially in the form of respiratory ailments.

Old systems were costly and unreliable. Almost always, we receive different styles and forms when the regional office asks for reports from the field offices and recalls the ARD, while use of fax and emails to send data sometimes lead to erroneous encoding or integration by the assigned staff.





The situation called for new ways of doing things and cloud computing technology offered efficiency gains. The time was ripe for us to level up, ARD Agustin said, and this was made possible under the leadership of Regional Director Renato L. Brion and the expertise of Lennie Yap and Michael Patricio in partnership with Engr. Martin Dedeles, an eGovernance advocate.

The transformation began in-house.

DILG-NCR shifted to google cloud computing and online databases were developed. Field personnel were trained to submit reports online and to integrate reports efficiently. Some initial wins included linkage of anti-red tape progress reports through cloud computing; chart monitoring reports on the progress of the Manila Bay cleanup program; and internal protocols for document protection and control.



The mental model of some City Directors that cloud computing entailed more work was challenged, when they experienced quick and reliable e-submissions anywhere, anytime. Time and space were bridged, as NCR personnel could access and contribute information to the cloud-enabled databases 24/7 wherever they were.

As a result, DILG-NCR was able to cut down operating costs, particularly storage, and have widened virtual operations as local government operating officers can access files, communications and knowledge products by the touch of the finger on personal mobile phones or tablets.

And the demonstration effect is now beyond DILG-NCR. Introducing cloud-based technologies and innovation to hundreds of barangays in NCR is next. DILG-NCR has made the rounds in different cities in the region to launch this project.

In one of the cloud computing training sessions in NCR, RD Brion addressed barangay chairpersons and department heads: Cloud computing will benefit both users and clientele. This helps in improving service delivery. *Mapapabilis ang trabaho natin. Magagawa ng lalong mas maginhawa ang ating pamumuhay.*

The plan is to cover 1,706 barangays in NCR when the new set of barangay officials assumes office in 2014. By then, all LGUs in NCR shall have gone cloud computing, too.

DILG-NCR is leading the way; LGUs are catching up; and the roadmap to the cloud is being taken one step at a time. Indeed, the mother of innovation is need, and its offspring is efficiency and better ways of doing things.

That's why there's no turning back for DILG-NCR. We go cloud this time, until a better one comes along, RD Brion assured.

Contributors



Maria Lourdes Agustin

Assistant Regional Director, NCR, who believes in harmony with one's self and with others at work and in the family. Not everyone knows that she plucks the guitar and ukulele to produce sweet melodies for her children to sing. The harmony of things, the melody of collaboration and rhythm, are the laws of nature that define her both as a public servant and mother.



Anthony Ballug

Provincial Director of Mountain Province, CAR, who loves exploring nature, climbing hills, caving, trekking, going to places he has never been — and he prefers doing any of these alone.



Vedasto Bassi

City Director of Caloocan City, NCR, who hails from Solano, Nueva Vizcaya. What people do not know about him is that he is persistent and determined in meeting professional and personal goals. He considers being admitted to the Philippine Bar in 1995 as a professional and personal milestone.



Rene Brion

Regional Director, NCR, who has woven more than 37 years of innovation at the policy and operational levels to advance local governance wherever he is assigned. He is distinctive in his ideas, as he is robust in the impacts he leaves LGUs and co-workers he has worked with. The 'Brion touch' leaves a mark of discipline and rigor — especially to those who wish their fullest potentials unleashed.



Bruce Colao

Provincial Director of Camiguin Province, Region 10, who started his career in the public sector as SK chairman in 1992, then moved into legislation as councilor for three terms, and later on becoming vice-mayor of Lugait, Misamis Oriental. He has since crossed over to the career executive service with DILG as agency of first assignment.



Lionel Dalope

Provincial Director of Laguna, Region 4A, who describes himself as a simple person who loves to cook for his family and is always ready to lend a helping hand to those in need. He is a risk taker and interested in exploring various things.



Elpidio Durwin

Provincial Director of Isabela Province, Region 2, who credits DILG for nurturing his career from the day he was hired in the Department, his first job, up to this day as PD. His public life has always been devoted to DILG.



Luisa Echavia

City Director of Pasay City, NCR, who was a former Provincial Director of Rizal, Region 4A before moving to NCR as City Director. She is tenacious in the pursuit of local government reforms and fulfilled in the valuable contributions of the Department to LGUs. At the end of the day, the test of our relevance, Malou says, is when DILG is sought by the LGU. That's a simple measure that our work is valued and deemed effective by the client.

**Jhoaden Lucero**

City Director of Mandaue City, Region 7, who is fondly called Jao by colleagues, family and friends. She is a pioneer of innovations in the city and is described to have a smile like a sunrise.

**Ma. Loisella Lucino**

Provincial Director of Bohol Province, Region 7, who values and nurtures relationships. As PD, she maintains good interpersonal relationships within the team in DILG Bohol. A happy team produces great results, she says.

**Ruperto Maribbay**

Provincial Director of Quirino Province, Region 2, who used to be a Cluster Leader of Isabela Province in charge of CDP matters reporting directly to PD Durwin, until he was promoted PD of Quirino in 2012.

**Helen Mestidio**

Provincial Director of Capiz Province, Region 6, who has served in the province for almost four years and is known to have exceptional interpersonal skills. She retires in 2013 with much fulfillment about the transformations in Capiz.

**Ferdinand Panes**

City Director of Iloilo City, Region 6, who describes himself a mentor, law professor, and professional lecturer on local government. He authored a book on local government administration.

**Ma. Victoria del Rosario**

Provincial Director of Marinduque, Region 4B, who finds fulfillment in being able to influence other people and empower communities. The public is the mirror of who we are as DILG, she affirms.

**Arleen Ann Sanchez**

Provincial Director of Agusan del Sur, who was one of the eight pioneers of the Regional Office in CARAGA in 1995 and is the first female provincial director of DILG Agusan del Sur.

**Jay Eduarte Timbreza**

City Director of Pasig City, NCR, who values spirituality he puts in the job. It is not about religion, he explains. It is about making the people feel and realize that the work we perform together has purpose for ourselves and for the generations to come. Jay has made it to the career executive service.

**Merce Tuico**

Cluster Head in NCR, who is proud to have the opportunity to engage in partnerships with local officials, NGAs and CSOs. She does not evade challenges because this builds courage “to take the road less travelled” or “go where angels fear to tread”. Courage brings great rewards, she says.

Photos

Usec. Austere Panadero's Photo - Devconsult, Inc.

Bohol Photos

1 (Loboc River) www.infobohol.com; 2 (Chocolate hills) www.adventurousfeet.com; 3 (Group Picture) from PD Ma. Loiselle Lucino

Camiguin Photos

1 (Light house) www.world66.com ; 2 (Group meeting) from PD Bruce Augusto Colao; 3 (Group picture) from PD Colao; 4 (Sunken Garden) www.tripsandscoops.com

Agusan del Sur Photos

1 (Agusan Marsh) www.vigattintourism.com; 2 (Group meeting) www.agusandelsur.gov.ph

Iloilo City Photos

1 (Dinagyang Festival) www.philippinestodayus.com; 2 (Molo Church) www.famouswonders.com; 3 (Floating Lanterns) www.iloilodinagyang.com

Laguna Photos

1 (Turbina Terminal) from PD Lionel Dalope; 2 (Maharlika Highway) from PD Dalope; 3 (Maria Makiling Statue) www.spreadsomewes.com; 4 (Nagcarlan Underground cemetery) www.byaherosnapshots.com; 5 (Sculpture) www.imagesphilippines.com

Isabela Photos

1 (Tree planting) from PD Elpidio Durwin; 2 (Group meeting) from PD Durwin; 3 (St. Mathias Church) from PD Durwin; 4 (Magat Dam) www.lakbaypilipinas.com

Caloocan Photos

1 (Tanigue Creek) from CD Vedasto Bassi; 2 (Tanigue Creek) from CD Bassi; 3 (Tanigue Creek) from CD Bassi; 4 (Bonifacio Monument) www.skyscrapercity.com

Capiz Photos

1 (Capiz Capitol) from CD Helen Mestidio; 2 (Group picture) from CD Mestidio; 3 (Rafflesia flower)- www.mobidlingthoughtswordpress.com

Pasig Photos

1 (Sapang Liwanag) from Cluster head Merce Tuico; 2. (Sapang Liwanag) from Cluster head Tuico;
3 (Caruncho Complex) www.urbanroamer.wordpress.com

Mountain Province Photos

1 Ifugao – www.flicker.com; 2 strawberry – www.tripsiders.com; 3 (Banaue rice terraces) www.vasthoristravel.com;
4 (Mountain Province) www.flicker.com; 5 (Sagada) – www.magelanokeliones.it

Pasay City Photos

1 (Cutcut Creek) from CD Maria Luisa Echavia; 2 (Cutcut Creek) from CD Echavia; 3 (Cutcut Creek) from CD Echavia

Marinduque Photos

1 (Partnership Parade) from PD Victoria del Rosario; 2 (Moriones festival) from PD Del Rosario; 3 (Children) from PD Del Rosario

Mandaue Photos

1 Group meeting - from CD Jhoaden Lucero; 2 group meeting - from CD Lucero; 3 Mandaue City hall – www.thetravelingfeet.com; 4 Mandaue bridge – www.skyscrapercity.com

NCR Photos

1 Group picture - from ARD Maria Lourdes Agustin; 2 Group picture - from ARD Agustin; 3 Group picture from ARD Agustin; 4 Circle – en.wikigogo.com; 5 Ortigas – www.pinoyexchange.com