



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.