



empowering.
effective.
ethical.



RAMON A. PIANG, SR. Mayor of Upi, Maguindanao

Upi Mayor Ramon Piang was one year away from being ordained a priest and was on a one-year residency when he decided the priestly vocation was not his calling.

Much of his adolescent years were spent shaping up his Christian values. He graduated from elementary in the then OMI-ran Notre Dame of Upi. In high school, he was already living inside the Archdiocese seminary in Nuling in Cotabato City as a convent boy. He graduated from college at the Notre Dame University as religious seminarian.

He took up his major seminary at the Remase House of Formation in Davao City. As with every seminarian on the verge of priesthood, deacons are required to go into a one-year 'furlough' to prepare themselves for the service of God and Christianity. Mayor Piang instead found himself leaving the seminary in 1974, and became a teacher in his alma mater. Eventually, he became the principal of Notre Dame of Upi High School.

In 1992, without holding any previous elective post, he ran for vice mayor as an independent and handily won. Piang served his full three 3-year consecutive terms, before deciding to run for mayor. He went up against the powerful and politically entrenched Sinsuats.

Piang won despite being handi-capped by his lack of resources and became the first Teduray mayor of Upi after more than 40 years. He had the strong backing of his supporters. He

was unopposed when he ran for a fresh 3-year term in 2013 although he served out the remaining 2 years of the term of former Mayor Ruben Platon, who resigned in 2011 after the latter was appointed to a national government position.

His background in the seminary and as school principal, Mayor Piang said, was his strength and inspiration in introducing reforms and instituting good governance in Upi.

Early into his second term as mayor, his town won the Kaagapay Seal of Excellence in recognition for his good governance and leadership. The award was handed out by the Canadian International Development Agency-funded Local Government Support Program in 2004.

During his first term as mayor, he introduced a novel way of resolving conflict by engaging a tri-people council. The council's primary function is to amicably settle cases arising among Upi residents, or between Upi residents and outside parties. It adheres to the principle of promoting kinship and neighborhood; and arbitration and mediation performed with the participation of the community. This lessened civil and criminal cases filed in regular courts by resolving conflicts—most of them land related—within the Mayor's Council.

The Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. reported that "(T)he program has contributed significantly to the decrease of cases filed with the police by 35 percent." It also "restored customs and traditions of resolving conflicts of the Teduray and Muslim populace."

Mayor Piang said he was able to concentrate on local governance instead of consuming time settling conflicts like rido with the help of the Council. The pioneering effort won for the town the 2004 Gawad Galing Pook Outstanding Program award.

Mayor Piang's outstanding efforts in peace building and community involvement led in his appointment as member of the government panel in the peace talks between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in 2010.

Even while serving as town vice mayor, Mayor Piang already saw the changing and evolving world of infor-

mation technology. Piang said that getting wired was the only way Upi could graduate from an isolated and desolate mountain town into a progressive and productive community.

In 2003, the town council approved and "passed the Information Systems Strategic Plan (ISSP) which summarized Upi's efforts to make itself literally in touch with the current Information Communication Technology (ICT) especially the world wide web."

In October 2004, Upi became the site of the first Community e-Center (CeC) in the country. It bagged the Best ePractice Award 2005 given by APEC Digital Opportunity Center in Taipei, Taiwan. The program also became a finalist in the 2nd Philippine CeC Excellence Awards and won 2nd best placer CeC in the Philippines in 2011.

In 2010, Mayor Piang was given the Philippine Digital Inclusion Champion Award by the Commission on Information and Communication Technology in Cebu City. The town's ISSP became one of the most awarded ICT programs by an LGU throughout the country capped by the Galing Pook Award in 2011.

The community e-center connected the town to the "rest of the world" by hooking up the town in the internet highway through its website. The center became Upi's 'social enterprise.' Anyone can have access to the town's annual revenues and budget including its annual development program. Bidding of projects and purchases are now done online. The town's real property tax and assessment can also be accessed online. "This is transparency and accountability at work," Mayor Piang proudly beamed.

Upi was conferred the Seal of Good Housekeeping from the Department of the Interior and Local Government, and the Civil Service Commission Seal of Excellence for the municipality's adherence to the Anti-Red Tape Act.

The town-funded radio station, dxUP, is another award-winning program of Upi under the leadership of Mayor Piang. In 2007, it was cited by Titus Brandsma for community communications and for promotion of peace and inter-faith dialogue. The radio station was a spillover program from the CeC upon realization of the powerful reach

of the internet. They are now also incorporating online television programming making Upi's information and communication office truly multi-media.

Along with the Tri-People Mayor's Council, the radio program is one of the most documented and studied programs of the municipality. These programs have embodied and embraced people participation in its purest and truest forms.

Aside from the two programs that have bagged numerous awards and citations, Upi's Project Rendaw also won for its "Better Education through Community Action" the Galing Pook Award in ARMM in 2010. Through Project Rendaw, the number of pupils who can read increased from 2 out of 10 to 8 out of 10.

The mayor himself has also reaped numerous individual awards, among them being one of the Top Ten Outstanding Municipal Mayors in 2003 given by the Local Government Leadership Award. He also received the Ramon Aboitiz Award for Individual Excellence in 2006.

Under his watch, Upi grew from a 4th class municipality with an annual income of less than P50 million to a 1st class town with an annual budget of P136 million.

Piang credits his success to the participation of the people in Upi. People will build up their trust with the local government, the mayor said, if town officials show exemplary leadership. He added that, "without the support of the people, a mayor cannot do things he wants to do."



2nd Jesse Robredo Leadership Award

Rationale

Secretary Jesse Robredo, the embodiment of the ideal values of a man and a public servant, may have left a country in dire need of his kind of leadership, but his spirit lives on in every individual he encountered and institutions he built or recreated.

The best tribute that can be given Secretary Robredo is to continue his legacy of dedicated, committed, humble and selfless public service, and to clamor and genuinely work for good governance. His brand of leadership has to be spread further along with the good news of Secretary Robredo that good governance is indeed possible, and that every Filipino should demand for it for national transformation to take place.

To make these happen, the Galing Pook Foundation is conducting the annual Jesse Robredo Leadership Award, and is promoting the lessons and inspirations of his kind of governance that is hoped to become the norm rather than an exception especially in public institutions.

Objectives

The Jesse Robredo Leadership Award seeks to:

1. Recognize local chief executives who have shown effective, transparent, accountable, participatory, innovative and ethical leadership;
2. Showcase a culture of excellence in local governance through the institutionalization of policies, systems and practices; and
3. Motivate LGU leaderships and communities to sustain and enhance meritorious programs.

Eligibility and Qualifications

To be eligible for the Jesse Robredo Leadership Award, a local chief executive should:

1. Be an incumbent municipal/city mayor or governor;
2. At least into his/her second term;
3. His/her LGU has a Seal of Good Housekeeping and is a Galing Pook Awardee.

Criteria

1. Effective (service delivery, economic development, efficiency, investing in people, poverty reduction, mobilizing people)
2. Transparent and accountable (Seal of Good Housekeeping)
3. Innovative (Galing Pook Awards and other reputable recognitions)
4. Participatory and empowering (partnerships, inclusiveness)
5. Ethical (no verifiable questionable transactions and activities)



A Tribute to Jesse Robredo

In 1991, the Local Government Code was passed decentralizing the functions of delivering basic services from the central government to the provinces, the cities, municipalities and barangays. Three years later, in 1994, Galing Pook started recognizing best practices in local governance by local government units based on impact, citizen participation, innovation, replicability and sustainability. During that year, Naga City, under the leadership of Jesse Robredo, garnered its first Galing Pook awards for outstanding local governance program. To date, Naga City has received a total of 14 Galing Pook awards (7 outstanding, 3 trailblazing and 4 special citations). It is now the most awarded LGU in the country from the Galing Pook Foundation. Taken all together, these awards give us ten lessons and guideposts, according to Jesse Robredo and Naga City, in practicing good local governance.

Lessons and Guideposts for Good Local Governance

1 Improve Productivity. Naga City embarked on a program that aimed to bring out the full potential of various departments and offices of the entire city government. It had four main thrusts of (a) providing sufficient services to meet the requirements of the population; (b) getting optimum outputs with minimum expenditures; (c) producing quality results as desired and planned; and (d) making services accessible and acceptable on the principle of “the greatest good for the greatest number.”

2 Computerize. The city created an effective and efficient management system that streamlined business transaction processes, provided a dependable database for more effective decision-making, and made the city administration more responsive to its citizen’s needs. The program components – management information system, geographic information system and minimum basic needs database – enabled the city government to establish a local database of household population for every barangay. Support functions were ensured in all line departments integrating revenue generation and social development to deliver excellent services to the constituents.

3 Empower the People. The city government laid down a clear and comprehensive framework that allows its constituents to take active part in governance. Nagueños are able to voice their concerns and suggestions to the City Hall and act on various issues – from procurement to budgeting, to scuttling an initial plan of the local government to allow a golf course. The program facilitated the engagement of 193 non-government and people’s organizations with the local government. It led to the institutionalization of the Naga City People’s Council which counts NGOs, POs, cooperatives, barangays, and everyone whose voices need to be heard, as members.

4 i-Govern. The city operationalized the “power of information” and its value as a truly empowering tool when made accessible for the people. Nagueños need only go online for their business license, birth certificate, or even when they want to bid for government procurements. People get what they need faster and more efficiently, practically free from red tape and grease money. Through i-Governance, Naga City also promotes good governance by providing the people with information on city government policies, programs, and operations.

5 Reinvent Institutions. In the reinvented school board of Naga City, the structure ensures transparency, accountability, participation, and predictability. The membership has been expanded to include representatives from the academe, business, religious, alumni associations, and non-government organizations. The NCSB prepares the local education plan and budget with strong citizen participation. It also made education officials accountable to the public and identified alternative ways of developing and financing the local education plan by mobilizing internal and external resources.

6 Train the Youth. The City Youth Month Program of Naga engaged the city’s top youth leaders to compete for the chance to land in one of the 45 slots that would put them at the executive and legislative positions, as well as in the non-government sector as Naga City People’s Youth Council representatives that embody Naga’s unique participatory governance model. While there are limits to the authority extended to the City Youth Officials during their term, they are given a wide leeway in running the affairs of the city government. The project enhanced the involvement of the youth in government affairs.

7 Be Prepared Always. Started in May 1991, Emergency Rescue Naga addresses the urgent need for fast and reliable service in times of emergency. ERN provides 24-hour quick response medical and protective services to all Naga City residents in crisis situations. The program mobilizes the combined resources of the city government such as the police and fire departments, the local association of barangay councils, government-owned and private hospitals and schools, radio stations, local amateur radio groups and private medical volunteers.

8 Prioritize the Marginalized. The city launched the Kaantabay sa Kauswagan or Partners in Development Program in 1989 to address issues in a way that is fair for both the informal settlers and landowners and that will discourage informal settling for good. The program is guided by two key principles. First, the government will not help the urban poor unless they actively participate in solving their own problems. Informal settlers have to organize, settle their own boundary disputes, negotiate with landowners, and make down payments for their home lots with substantial support from the city government together with its three partner NGOs. Second, is the tripartite effort among the urban poor organizations, national and local government agencies, and landowners in which the interests and abilities of each party are taken into account.

9 Invest in Children. Evolving from the traditional day care services of the DSWD and complemented by the Montessori system in pre-school education, the comprehensive and innovative program addresses the need for improved access and equity in quality education for the young city residents. It was conceptualized by the city government, in cooperation with the parents association, barangay councils and NGOs. Since its inception in 1992, the NEED program has successfully revolutionized the concept of the day care service in Naga City forging a high level of synergy between program managers and participants.

10 Together, We Can Do Better. The Metro Naga Development Council, a partnership among the LGUs, pools together the efforts and resources of 13 local government units, the private sector and the national government agencies in Camarines Sur focusing on projects and activities which address the immediate needs of the community and lay the groundwork for the long-term growth in the area. MNDC, with specific task forces, focuses on the maximization of resources to reach more constituents widening the target coverage with practically the same logistical capacity.