

'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.

