

- Awards—Galing Pook Awards

Galing Pook lauds feats in local gov'ts

Philippine Daily Inquirer · 27 Oct 2024 · A3 · By Julie M. Aurelio

President Marcos on Friday conferred the 2024 Galing Pook Awards, recognizing outstanding local government programs in health, education and other services.

It may have been a week of widespread calamity that once again tested the leadership especially of local governments.

But perhaps it was also an opportune time to recognize some of their achievements.

A comprehensive breast cancer screening and treatment program for women in Taguig City and a protection program against child abuse, exploitation and violence in Valenzuela City.

These were among the initiatives credited to the winners of the 2024 Galing Pook Awards, which recognize outstanding local government programs that offer solutions toward the efficient delivery of services.

President Marcos led the awarding ceremony in Malacañang on Friday, describing those who helmed the 10 outstanding local governance programs as “leaders and visionaries.”

“We stand at the heart of governance—where big ideas from our local government units and development partners come to life ... These programs prove that when local leaders rise to the occasion, when they embrace creativity and resourcefulness, real change can happen,” he said.

Innovation, community effort

Established in 1993, the Galing Pook Foundation (GPF) received 147 applications for this year’s awards from 111 local government units across the country, and this was whittled down to 18 finalists. A joint project of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, (DILG) DILG Local Government Academy, Ford Foundation, academic institutions, and governance advocates, Galing Pook is aimed at incentivizing innovation and community participation in the local governments.

The Foundation said this year’s awardees “reflect a diverse range of initiatives, from environmental sustainability and child protection to education and inclusive economic growth.”

“These programs have proven that local governments can be key drivers of change in their communities when they prioritize collaboration, inclusivity, and innovation,” GPF said in a statement.

From education to environment

This year’s Galing Pook winners are the following:

The Balanga Community-based Ecotourism Zone in Balanga City, Bataan, which combined environmental conservation and local economic development to become a model for sustainable ecotourism.

“Breathing Life into the Ayta Magbukun: A Collaborative Initiative for Language Restoration in Bataan”—a cultural preservation initiative in the province intended to restore and revitalize the Ayta Magbukun language.

“Project Teaching Opportunities: Prioritizing Illiteracy in Cabagan, Isabela,”—an education program which tackles illiteracy through “tailored” learning interventions for marginalized and disadvantaged populations.

The Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology, the first Local College in the Davao region (in particular, the municipality of the same name in Davao del Norte), which pioneered access to higher education in agriculture and sciences for underserved communities.

“Saving Kan: A Love Story In Ormoc Bay,” a rehabilitation program for marine mammals and reptiles that serves to protect and restore marine biodiversity.

“Pag-asa sa Bagong Bahay in Pandi, Bulacan,”—a housing program that also fosters a sense of community and empowerThe ment among its beneficiaries.

The Puerto Galera Waste Water Management program in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro, which addresses wastewater management challenges in a tourist-heavy destination while promoting public health and environmental sustainability;

The **Quezon City** Birth Registration Online, a digital birth registration services to ensure that every child's right to identity is fulfilled.

The Ating Dibdibin Program of Taguig City, a comprehensive breast cancer control program which helped increased the breast cancer screening rate in the city to 8.48 percent, or four times greater than the national average, and reduce breast cancer mortality to 17 percent, lower than the national average of 36 percent.

“Safe Spaces, Safeguarding Children: Strengthening LGUled Community-Based Child Protection in Valenzuela City,” a comprehensive child protection program against child abuse, exploitation and violence. Valenzuela City program received a Special Citation on Participatory Governance in recognition of its efforts to “empower communities through inclusivity, equity, and active citizen participation in local governance processes.”

‘Creative thinking’

The President hailed the awardees for their “very innovative and out-of-the-box thinking,” as he urged local executives to be “leaders, innovators and true public servants” who will “step forward and lead the change.”

“What I particularly admire about the Galing Pook Awards is that it is not about checking boxes or meeting quotas—it’s about creativity and courage in governance. And in the new world after the pandemic, innovation and creative thinking are going to be the key in every aspect of our lives. It tells us that it is not enough to govern for the people; one must govern with the people,” Mr. Marcos said.