

Philippines: The Galing Pook Foundation Awards for Outstanding Local Government Programs

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The Galing Pook Foundation is in the process of re-engineering the Galing Pook Awards to better respond to the gains made in local autonomy after fifteen years of decentralization in the Philippines.

The overall emphasis of the new Galing Pook Award is to evaluate how individual programs have translated into improvements in the beneficiaries' quality of life, to serve as an incentive to improve local governance, to inspire government workers to continue to innovate, and to encourage best practice development in marginalized and poorly funded regions. The program's ultimate goal is to help foster democratic governance and nation building by strengthening and professionalizing government and empowering communities to encourage citizen participation in local governance.

The Galing Pook Foundation currently holds two types of competition: awards for innovations and awards for continuing excellence. By recognizing both trailblazing and consistency, the Foundation can encourage local governments not only to explore new best practices, but also to consolidate their programming across longer periods of time.

In addition to the recognition of exemplary programs and local governments, the Foundation has also embarked on a Replication Program that assists in capacity building of local government units by disseminating, popularizing, and replicating the practices pioneered by the Galing Pook Award Winners. The Replication Program supports project implementation by providing a venue for innovators to collaborate and to study practices that have proven to be effective solutions to common problems.

One distinguishing characteristic of several of the 2005 Top Ten Outstanding Local Government Award Winners, many of which also received Special Citations in 2006 for Continuing Excellence, is a common focus on sustainable local development and environmental protection. Three of the ten award winners propose new modes of coastline management, while four of the ten use varying approaches to cooperative community development. By emphasizing sustainability, the Foundation wishes to

publicize new methods for creating inclusive and holistic economic growth in marginalized municipalities and islands in the Philippines.