

The Road Ahead

This study and the focused group discussion revealed that at least three basic elements are needed to enhance the performance of barangay officials, their staff, and other local leaders and volunteers. These are:

1. The proper attitude towards public service and the clarity of understanding their different roles, functions, and responsibilities.
2. A set of aptitudes or competencies in each of the eight thematic areas/service areas mentioned. Among the most essential needs for barangay officials are: administrative or managerial skills, engaging citizens participation, and program development and management and resource generation.
3. A service ethic and action-orientation to proceed and persist despite scarcity of resources. There is no doubt that barangays have a key role to play in bringing about socio-economic, political, and cultural development at the grassroots level. If the barangay is to be maintained as the front-line institution of service delivery, something has to be effected soon. There is the need to really institute changes and reforms not only in the administrative and financial-economic aspects of governance, but also in the level of citizens' participation and empowerment: Thus we must reinforce those systems that are functioning, discard the hard-to-implement rules and introduce new ones which are more feasible and practical. Effective and efficient redistribution of resources will also have to be made.

Even the attitude of national government agencies (including the highest executive office) needs a paradigm shift towards genuine consultation with the barangay-coupled with support structures and mechanisms, from key sectors of the community, the civil society and the business sector

Empowerment of the barangay would also mean an empowerment of "Imperial Manila" which must learn to accept that empowerment requires equitable sharing and/ or complementation of resources to enable poor communities to keep pace and learn to rely on its citizens to fuel development effort

The empowering environment created by RA No. 7160 (LG Code) serves to lead the way and point to the right direction-but ultimately, it will be leaders with heart, character, and integrity who will make the big difference