

Community Participation and People Empowerment

in Naga City, Philippines



Outline

- The Setting
- The Naga Governance Model
- Evolving the Naga Model
 - ◆ Progressive Perspective
 - ◆ Partnerships
 - ◆ Participation
 - ◆ The *i*-Governance Program
- Impact of the Naga Model
- Conclusion



What Naga Is

- **Population** - city of 139,000 in Central Philippines
- **Center of local innovation** - model LGU; recipient of more than 50 national and international recognition, including 1998 Dubai International Award
- **Livable city** - one of Asia's "Most Improved City", says *Asiaweek* newsmagazine
- **Strong NGO sector** - local presence of vibrant civic, business and people's organizations



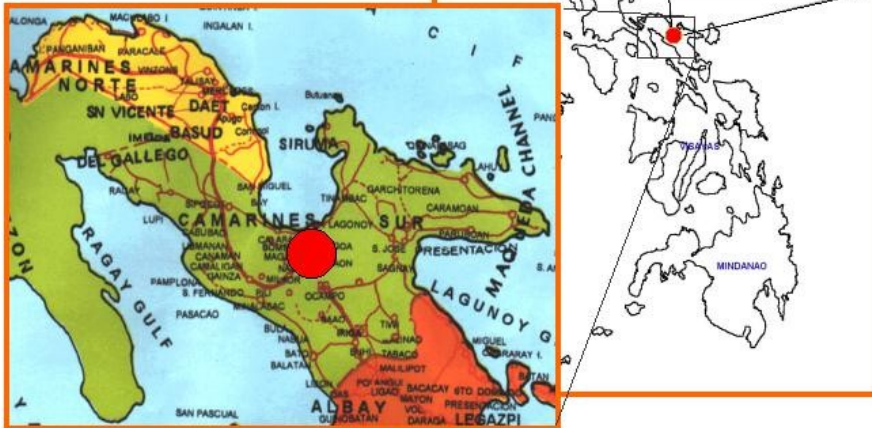
What Naga Is Not

Naga a typical Philippine city:

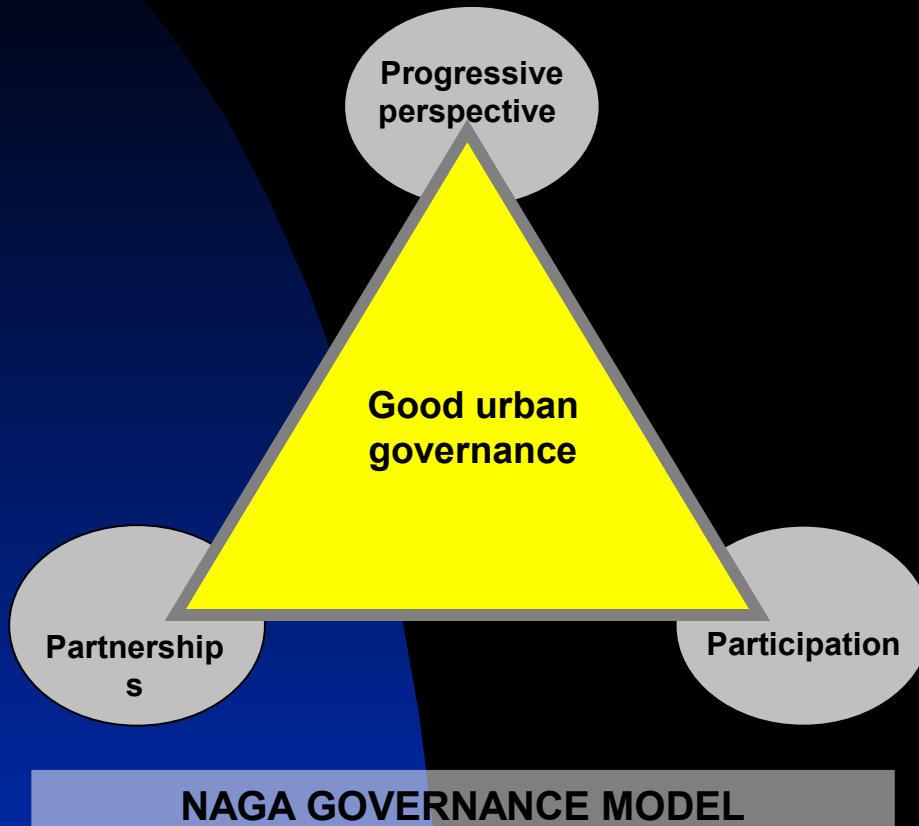
- **Medium-sized, not big**
 - ◆ Midsized in terms of land area and population among 114 Philippine cities
- **Landlocked, not a port city**
 - ◆ has no shipping industry
- **Peripheral, not central**
 - ◆ 500 kms away from Metro Manila, Metro Cebu

Fig. 1 - THE SETTING

Location Map
Naga City, Philippines



Conceptual Framework



- **Progressive development perspective.** Seeks prosperity-building tempered by an enlightened perception of the poor
- **Functional partnerships.** Vehicles that enable the city to tap community resources for priority undertakings
- **Participation.** Mechanisms that ensure long-term sustainability of local undertakings



Progressive Perspective

- A function of effective leadership in managing change
- Anchored on three doables:
 - ◆ For the **leadership** - *building trust*
 - ◆ For the **bureaucracy**- *building confidence and capacity*
 - ◆ For the **city** as a whole - *restoring pride in the Nagueño*



Facilitating Change

- **Confidence building**
 - ◆ Eradicated illegal gambling
 - ◆ Stamped out lewd shows
- **City hall reforms**
 - ◆ Improved workers' benefits
 - ◆ Reorganized bureaucracy based on competence
 - ◆ Activated Merit & Promotion Board to eliminate patronage
 - ◆ Adoption of more open, deliberative and participative system of management
- **Community reforms**
 - ◆ Reached out to NGO/PO community as matter of policy
 - ◆ Restored accountability of city hall
 - ◆ Promoted “citizen ownership” of their government



Investing in People

- City hall reforms anchored on the implementation of the Productivity Improvement Program
- Application of private sector HRM techniques at City Hall
- A unique intervention focused on
 - ◆ employee empowerment (people change) and
 - ◆ improvements on systems and procedures (systems change)

to improve the quality and quantity of frontline service delivery



Functional Partnerships

- Enable LGUs to marshal untapped resources of the local community for pro-poor programs and other local development initiatives
- Can take place
 - ◆ between and among the various levels of government (national, regional, local);
 - ◆ between government and the NGO-PO community; and
 - ◆ between government and private individuals or entities
- Can be
 - ◆ *equity-building or growth-oriented*
 - ◆ *government-initiated or private-led*



Operative Principles

- **Role definition**
 - ◆ setting of rules of engagement minimizes potential conflicts
- **Resource complementation**
 - ◆ Attains synergy: “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts”
- **Specialization**
 - ◆ moving towards one’s core competencies



Local Equity Building Initiatives

- Provision of internet access to public high schools
- Construction of school buildings
- Development of specialized high schools
- Implementation of livelihood and enterprise development projects
- Training and marketing assistance
- Rehabilitation of malnourished preschool children
- Disaster preparedness and mitigation



Growth Oriented Initiatives

- Urban Transport and Traffic Management Plan
- Panganiban Beautification and Upgrading Project
- Satellite/District Markets
- Central Business District II
- Naga Southwest Development Project



People Participation

- At the operational and practical level, partnerships work best among organized groups and institutions
- Can exclude community at large (particularly marginalized sectors) reducing them to mere spectators
- Partnerships must be complemented by mechanisms that mainstream the marginalized, and actively engaged them in governance



Partnership Mechanisms

- **Continuing NGO accreditation**
 - ◆ After the Code was passed, Naga was among the first to implement the provision mandating NGO accreditation
 - ◆ During its first run in 1993, more than 40 applied with the city council and were duly accredited.
- **Multi-level consultation mechanisms**
 - ◆ Under Naga SPEED component, multiple consultation channels were set up
 - ◆ Specific sectors, groups, or the entire constituency can participate in identifying developmental priorities, or stamp their mandate—or disapproval—on major policy issues



Partnership Mechanisms

- **Referendum on development issues**
 - ◆ Among these channels is the citywide Referendum, which Naga pioneered
 - ◆ On August 6, 1993, three development issues were submitted to Nagueños for decision
 - ◆ In the process, the city government demonstrated that participation even at this scale works
- **The Empowerment Ordinance and the Naga City People's Council**
 - ◆ Through a landmark legislation, the local government initiated the establishment of a system of partnership wherein the city encouraged the federation of these NGOs and POs into the Naga City People's Council (NCPC)
 - ◆ Institutionalized a system of self-regulation among the rank and file of NGOs and POs in the city



The Naga City People's Council

Consisting of duly accredited NGOs and POs in the city, the council

- appoints NGO representatives to local special bodies of the City Government
- observes, votes and participates in the deliberation, conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of projects, programs and activities of the City Government
- proposes legislation, participates and votes at the committee level of the Sanggunian, and
- acts as the people's representatives in the exercise of their constitutional rights to information



i-Governance Program

- Addresses the needs of individual citizens who, by choice or circumstance, do not want or cannot join organized groups
 - ◆ ***inclusive governance***, which seeks to embrace, rather than exclude, individuals, peoples and sectors in running government
 - ◆ ***information openness***, which demonstrates that information is power, and truly empowering when placed at the hand of the citizens
 - ◆ ***interactive engagement***, which puts premium on information exchange through continuing dialog between authority and constituency, and
 - ◆ ***innovative management***, which is committed to a culture of excellence sustained by creativity and innovations



Components

- **naga.gov (“naga-dot-gov”)**
 - ◆ The revitalized and reengineered website of the city government
 - ◆ Harnesses cutting-edge IT (“information technology”) in providing accurate, relevant and engaging information about Naga to the global Internet community, particularly to web-enabled Naga residents here and abroad
- **Naga City Citizens Charter**
 - ◆ A guidebook on key services of the city government
 - ◆ The newest tool developed by the city government to empower its citizenry by promoting transparency and accountability in service delivery



Impact of Naga Model

- **Naga is among the country's fastest-growing economies.** Its annual growth rate of 6.5% is higher than the national average. it led to
 - ◆ a lower unemployment rate of 5.2%, which is around half of the national total
 - ◆ a per capita gross product that is 115% higher than the national average
 - ◆ a family income that is 126% higher than the average family in Bicol, and 42% higher than the national average; and
 - ◆ a lower poverty incidence of 29% which is significantly lower than Bicol's 50%
- **A participative society exists in Naga,** where a form of direct democracy works hand in hand with representative democracy, the only one of its kind in the Philippines



Impact of Naga Model

- **The marginalized sectors of society have been strengthened and organized**, both at the city and barangay levels
- **Participation and inclusiveness** in direction setting, policymaking, as well as program and project implementation, monitoring and evaluation at the city level, **has been widened**
- **Broadbased stakeholder**ship, propelled by greater NGO/PO participation, **has enhanced the sustainability and acceptability of Naga's innovative programs and projects**
- **A positive change in perception and attitude** of the civil society towards the city government, and vice versa, **was engendered**



Impact of Naga Model

- **The presence of NCPC has promoted greater transparency, engendering an atmosphere of mutual trust**
- **International recognition of Naga's successful experiment in political empowerment under the program has confirmed the city is on the right track**



Conclusion

- Sustainable partnerships are critical to livable cities in the 21st century
- They must be complemented by a progressive perspective among local leaderships, particularly one that is shaped by enlightened perception of the poor
- Mechanisms for greater participation in governance also critical—to address the exclusionary nature of partnerships at the operational and practical level
- The challenge before us is to transform these concepts into our second nature

