

Cambodians want to replicate Bacolod's best practices, too

BY CHRYSEE SAMILLANO

The representatives of Sangkat, Cambodia, who saw the infrastructure development in Bacolod during their visit, said they would like to partner with the city by replicating its best practices, and in improving their local infrastructure.

Soy Kosal, chief of Sagkat, said “We are here, not only to share our best practices to Bacolod, but also to learn from the best practices of the city and bring them to Cambodia.”

Kosla, who was aided by an interpreter, said that, during their two-day site visit of Bacolod, they saw that its infrastructures is highly developed and better, compared to their country.

“The Bacolod City Government Center is really a great building and looks like the White House in the United States,” he also said.

Kosal said they saw in the presentation of Bacolod that it has learned its best practice experience from private partnership in infrastructure development. There are non-government organizations who play a crucial role in the development of the infrastructure and the economy of the city, he said.

SDC PROJECT

Mayor Evelio Leonardia said they would also like to replicate the best practices of Cambodia and have chosen the Social Development Center, whose present condition needs some improvement, as the project to adopt.

He said they are working with Virlanie Foundation to help them on the project. “Hopefully, when the representatives of Virlanie Foundation come back from Paris, we can finalize and formalize the arrangement,” he added.

Kosal said they intend to maintain this partnership with Bacolod for a long time.

“I think Mayor Evelio Leonardia is really a great mayor since he has served for three terms and I hope he wins in the next election,” he said.

Meanwhile, Kosal said they have chosen two projects from the Democratic Local Governance in Southeast Asia (DELGOSEA) – the one window service in order to

provide good social services to the people, and the People Private Public Partnership in infrastructure development of Toule, Sangke.

ONLY CITY IN PH

Leonardia thanked DELGOSEA for having chosen Bacolod as the only city in the Philippines for their project. “

“We are glad that we are now part of the league of Southeast Asian nations that include Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia and the Philippines. I hope this experience will bring the Southeast Asian nations even closer,” Leonardia said.

The DELGOSEA Project has prepared 16 Best Practices from five participating countries – Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, on the themes of People’s Participation, Institutional Governance, Urban Development, and Fiscal Management.

SHARING TO CONTINUE

On the other hand, Antonio Avila Jr., DELGOSEA national coordinator, said the replication process from one country to another started in August 2011.

They will have an initial conference tentatively in Thailand where all pilot cities in all five countries will report on their accomplishments in replicating the best practices, he said.

But we are hoping that even beyond the project, the relationship that has been established in these countries will strengthen and will continue in terms of sharing of local governance best practices, probably in terms of trade, investment, and sharing of customs and traditions, Avila said.

Councilor Em Ang said the city is proposing a 1 to 1.5 hectare site for the Bacolod Youth Center (or the SDC). The private NGO, Virlanie Foundation, is willing to fund the first phase of the construction and development of the project, that will cost about P8.5 million, she said. The total project cost is P25 million, she added.

Ang said Bacolod is on track, compared to other cities who participated in the replication project. Construction of the BYH will start soon and the memorandum of agreement is now being finalized between Bacolod and Virlanie Foundation.*CGS