

## **Benchmarking a Culture of Quality**

FOR MONTHS, the phrase “Building a Culture of Quality” has been a staple for the National Housing Authority. It has been featured on tarpaulin prints to hashtags in the official NHA Facebook posts. Decoding the phrase to a mere slogan is an understatement. General Manager Marcelino P. Escalada, Jr., adapted the term to be an underlying philosophy to describe his tenure as the NHA Chief.

The inspiration for the term, according to GM Escalada in an interview is based upon his work ethic. For over twenty years as a public servant, he made sure that high quality outputs should be uncompromised. What his vision for the Authority upon taking the helm as General Manager is to have something that is not out there. He wanted to elevate NHA’s performance not just on building houses but in terms of systems, policies, relationships, and procedures. His disdain for disorder only motivates him to implement systematic policies that would eventually lead to desirable results, which is of high quality. “If you are able to set up orderliness, then you have systematic thinking”, he adds.

Since the houses that NHA build are manifestation of itself as an agency, “Building a Culture of Quality” means that quality should also be embedded on the process of housing production. From planning, designing, forecasting to budgeting, the process is important in order for a quality output to exist. “One must not look solely at the end results, but also on the process.” According to him, everyone needs to participate and interact at a certain level. Emphasizing that there should be an extensive work done, whether it is through a simple communication letter or a draft design before transferring it to a supervisor. This interaction should persist until a consistent and reliable service is accomplished.

“A house that is comfortable to live in is the essence of what NHA stands for. If a beneficiary would want to live in that house, then it could be used as a benchmark for quality. Otherwise, time and resources are just wasted if the output is poorly made.”

GM Escalada admits that the challenging part on spreading this message is to convince other people to appreciate the way he thinks. As to what can be done about it, he says “leading by example. It’s just like asking help experiencing a flat tire in the middle of the road, you don’t ask other people for help, but if you push the car then people would come.”

By leading the way, he hopes to be able to inspire everyone to build a culture of quality.