

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND EVIDENCE-BASED ENGAGEMENT AT ATENEO DE NAGA UNIVERSITY

Ateneo de Naga University (ADNU) has long regarded community engagement as a vital expression of its mission to serve the common good. Guided by the University Social Involvement Council (USIC), ADNU follows a structured and research-informed approach to identifying and collaborating with local partners.

PROGRAMS



The USIC Guideline on Identifying and Selecting Partner Communities provides a clear framework for determining potential partners and ensuring that every collaboration rests on shared values and measurable community needs. The document outlines specific criteria that effective partners should possess (such as alignment of mission, organizational commitment, community trust, leadership support, and cultural competence) as well as procedures for initial research, key-informant interviews, and meetings with prospective partners. These written procedures are used by the USIC and its affiliated units to maintain transparency and consistency in community partnerships.

This policy framework is operationalized through data-driven fieldwork led by the Ateneo Social Science Research Center (ASSRC). In 2014, the Center conducted the Household Living Conditions Baseline Survey in collaboration with USIC, covering several barangays in Magarao, Milaor, and Canaman. The study involved multiple phases, from ocular visits and courtesy calls to household-level surveys and hazard mapping, and generated quantitative profiles of 1,686 households across nine barangays.

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The findings helped the University map out community realities in sectors such as education, health, environment, livelihood, and governance. For instance, the study reported that over 50% of households in participating communities lacked sufficient living space and around 30–40% of families fell below the monthly income threshold of Php 9,000. In governance indicators, average transparency and accountability index scores ranged between 3.0 and 3.5, suggesting moderate local participation and trust in local leadership. These data points became the foundation for subsequent USIC initiatives in education and local governance, including training programs for day care and primary school teachers, and participatory environmental management workshops.

By combining research evidence with written partnership guidelines, ADNU ensures that its social involvement efforts are not merely project-based but responsive to verified community contexts. The process, beginning with baseline surveys, followed by consultations, and culminating in co-designed interventions, reflects a model of participatory governance that places community voices at the center of University outreach.



Ultimately, this system demonstrates how ADNU's engagement with external stakeholders is guided by policy, informed by data, and anchored in long-term relationships. The University's sustained collaboration with local barangays and institutions embodies its Ignatian approach to social involvement: discerning where help is most needed, acting with competence and compassion, and continuously learning from the communities it serves.

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FEATURE

Carigsa
Magarao Communities Sur

It was a rainy morning, and a long ride on the way to Ilog Carigsa in Magarao, the site of the Bahay Bayan. The road was long, the signal was weak, and the community fell far from the horizon. We had been told that the outreach we would join was part of #BahayBayan, a community outreach consistently carried out as part of the Bahay Atenista program of our annual Ignaciana Outreach.

None of us had ever experienced helping to build a house, nor did we have any idea what to do when we got there. But what amazed us was that it wasn't only our students, faculty, and staff, and some members of the College Formation Team that we were also joined by the very utility workers we see every day, the ones who work tirelessly to keep the Ateneo campus clean.

That moment marked our first key realization. What we were part of wasn't simply an outreach—it was a united ADNU effort, where everyone had a purpose and every hand was essential.

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