

Improving Philippine education through organisation development



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The library of Betty-Go Belmonte Elementary School in Quezon City is currently one of the busiest rooms in the school. Every day, excited second-graders go in and out of the room, reading out loud and proud to the joy of their teachers and parents who are also regulars of the school library. The room bursts with so much excitement you wouldn't believe that just three months ago the library was the most quiet, often unnoticed, room in the school.

In September 2013, 128 out of the 339 second-grade students of Betty-Go Belmonte Elementary School were non-readers in English. 81 students were non-readers in Filipino. By December 2013, however, the figures dramatically dropped with zero non-readers, and 15 and 5 students considered syllable-readers in English and Filipino, respectively.

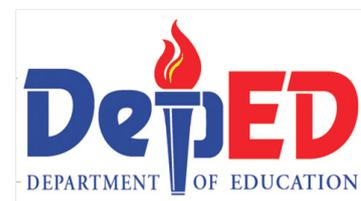
How did they do it?

The change that took place at Betty-Go Belmonte Elementary School did not happen overnight. In fact, the change happened systematically – through a 10-step continuous improvement process – implemented by six teachers comprising the schools' Continuous Improvement (CI) Programme team. These teachers took on the challenge of bringing down the percentage of non-readers in their school in only three months using CI tools, competencies and processes.

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CASE STUDY

JINKEE MOLINA
Department of Education



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The CI Programme is a project of the Department of Education and the Philippines Australia Human Resource and Organisational Development Facility (PAHRODF) to improve school processes and systems that affect the learning outcomes of students. Through formal training, workshops, and coaching, teachers who were enrolled in the program developed skills to analyse problems, formulate and implement appropriate solutions, and develop a system of continuous improvement, which they can apply in their schools and classrooms.

“The CI programme enabled us, teachers, to improve our way of teaching”

“Because of the CI programme we learned that we can lower the rate of non-readers in our school – even in a short timeframe. Before, we thought it was impossible. But when we applied the CI tools in coming up with solutions, we immediately saw the positive effect in the performance of our students. The CI programme enabled us, teachers, to improve our way of teaching,” said Jinkee Molina, team leader of Betty-Go Belmonte’s CI Programme.

Teachers are creative problem-solvers

By conducting a root-cause analysis, the teachers from Betty-Go Belmonte, led by Teacher Jinkee, were able to identify the high percentage of non-readers in second grade as the most pressing problem of the school. The teachers explained that second grade is a crucial grade level because when the students move up to third grade, they should already be able to read and understand lessons in Science, English, Filipino and Math in preparation for their national achievement test.

“The great thing about this project is that we were the ones who analysed the problem of our school. It was not dictated to us. We were the ones who discovered the gaps and we came up with our own strategies on how to solve it using the tools we learned from our CI training,” said Teacher Jinkee.

After a series of brainstorming sessions, the team launched the Daily Achievement Road to Excellence: Intensified Remedial Reading (DARE) or Project DARE, a school-wide project to decrease the number of non-readers in second grade – that includes daily reading remedial classes and weekly evaluation / dialogue with their parents and guardians.

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From “kanya kanya” to a standard teaching process

Planning, according to teacher Jinkee is one of the most important things they learned from the program. “I learned from the CI training that if you have a target to achieve you should not work on things without basis. There should be a process to follow. The process refines our craft.”

Teacher Elirose and Leslie, teachers of the CI team, explained: “Before, what we have was the “kanya kanya” system. We do things on our own. We just use materials that are available. For example, in teaching reading, one teacher may use reading materials that are totally different from the ones being used by another teacher. Some teachers may use a strategy involving flash cards, which the other classes don’t have. Because of the CI Programme, we developed a standard process. We developed a matrix so that our students are reading only one material.”

The programme made teachers approaches more strategic. “Because of the CI Programme I realised that I have a target in the classroom and I should have a process to follow in achieving my target,” added Teacher Leslie.

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Engaging the local community

Betty-Go Belmonte’s CI team implemented three key strategies in running Project DARE. First, they engaged their barangay captain. “Our barangay captain has always been supportive of our school. But when she saw the video message of Secretary Luistro on the CI Programme, she was so touched that she offered to provide free printing of our reading materials,” said Teacher Jinkee. Next, they empowered the parents. “Parents are the teachers at home. Since we can only guide students when they are in school, we invited parents to participate in the program. One of the things we really want to highlight is the importance of follow-up,” said Teacher Leslie. Every Friday, teachers meet with parents and guardians to monitor and validate if the children have been doing their reading homework. Third, they tapped Grade six students to tutor non-readers after school - especially those who cannot make it to the morning remedial classes.

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In November 2013, during the school's Book Week celebration, the team organised a ceremony to recognise non-readers who learned how to read, as well as their parents. It was the first time for most of them to come up on stage for an academic recognition. This made them even more motivated to keep reading and to keep learning after that.

Quality teachers for quality education

Teacher Jinkee shared that one of the secrets of their success was the encouragement they continuously receive from their school principal who gave her all-out support to the project. In fact, with the guidance and help of their principal, the team is set to expand the CI Programme next school year and apply it on other subjects like math and science.

Teacher Jinkee said her passion for teaching was rekindled by the CI Programme. She and her team are excited to witness more fruits of the programme as they expand it in the coming months. "As a teacher I want our students to experience quality education...that even if they are not able to study in an expensive school, they can still experience what it's like to study in a quality school." she said. "I am deeply grateful to the people behind the CI Programme because the project enabled us teachers to improve our way of teaching. The CI programme made quality teachers out of us and our passion for teaching was rekindled. What's more, we are able to touch lives – the lives of our students, their parents and families, our local community and our co-teachers. We are blessed to be selected to be a part of this program."