



## Case Study 21

### HR/OD Intervention Focus: Leadership Strengthening and Competency Building

#### Enhancing Service Delivery Outcomes and Technical Competencies

Concepcion Bringas has personally witnessed how the Government of Australia through PAHRODF has helped the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) in

the last seven years. Bringas is currently the Chief Administration Officer of the Staff Support Services in NAMRIA and had been in public service for almost four decades.

Bringas beams with pride as she talks about NAMRIA and how PAHRODF has steered it towards innovation, growth, and strategic alignment. She boasts, “My agency is open to change. It is becoming dynamic. We are a work in progress but we are embracing development.”

She is equally proud of the long-standing partnership between NAMRIA and PAHRODF. She says, “I really have high regard for the Facility. It is a champion of organisational and human resource development and the Facility is effective in assisting agencies in their needs in these areas. Learning Service Providers (LSPs) are experts in their respective fields. I call them chief agents because they were able to help and unite us.”

#### Client satisfaction

Bringas cites the Leadership Strengthening Intervention that she attended when she was still with the HR Information Services and was in charge of training programs. The intervention aimed to build the capacity of managers to achieve service delivery targets and was attended by close to 50 senior managers in NAMRIA. She shares, “There was an increasing need to support the mapping requirements in the Philippines. The intervention was meant to improve the capacity of NAMRIA senior managers and develop their leadership skills so that they can respond to the need.”

After the program, Bringas pursued a REAP focused on client satisfaction. She aimed to enhance key stakeholders' knowledge of NAMRIA through continuous information dissemination about NAMRIA, its functions, and its services. Four units of the HR Department

conducted surveys to determine the extent of NAMRIA's reach. Her team was initially coached by the LSP until they eventually learned how to conduct the surveys on their own.

The survey was designed to determine the satisfaction of partner agencies and external stakeholders with the map-making services of NAMRIA. Bringas points out, "The opinion of our external key stakeholders about us and our services is important because it is a reflection of our performance. The goal is to get feedback on how we are delivering our services."

### **Response rate as key**

An obstacle faced by Bringas during the conduct of the survey is the poor response rate. She laments, "It was a challenge to get feedback from our clients and we cannot control the response rate. Once we send the survey forms we have no way of knowing if they are going to return it to us or not." They were hoping for a response rate of at least 30 percent, but the returned survey forms were nowhere near that.

The low response rate prompted them to look for solutions and alternative data-gathering methods. Aside from offering incentives to encourage survey participation, her team also tapped other feedback channels. Ms. Bringas states, "We used the data gathered through the surveys and complemented it with existing 'over-the counter' data. We also increased the number of respondents. To further increase participation in surveys, we conducted focus group discussions (FGD). At the end of the FGD, we handed out the surveys."

Bringas shares that the support provided by NAMRIA in terms of human resources and budget helped ease her team's burden. With management also highly involved – regularly checking on their progress and offering assistance when needed – they felt the value of their work. She

relates, "During management reviews, the management verbalised how they like the significance of the data that we generated. These help them in crafting policies to improve client satisfaction." One such improvement is on information dissemination. "The data showed that we do not reach out to the general public and inform them of what we do and the significant contributions we have made to the programs and projects of the government," Bringas admits. NAMRIA is now addressing this concern.

### **Wearing a different hat**

Bringas shares how the Facility has also provided technical assistance after the organisational assessment showed gaps in the human resource development planning, which is part of her current role. She says, "Technical competency needs to be addressed because it is our people who will implement the strategic and the operational plans of the agency." Improving organisational capacity and competencies became the focus of her REAP.

After putting an assessment system in place and defining competency levels, Bringas says that they now need to use this so that they can bring employee skills to a satisfactory level. "Our curriculum should guide us on how to develop the capacity of our staff. Let us say we have a Geodetic Engineer I. We should have training programs that he should go through before he becomes Geodetic Engineer II," she explains. This she says is still work in progress and the long-term plan is to have a career plan for employees.

Bringas notes that managing change is not easy but the available communication tools have helped them to effectively convey what they are trying to achieve. With the different activities aligned towards competency-based human resource management and development – an area

which includes learning and development, recruitment, selection, placement and eventually, performance management – she points out that behavioural and paradigm changes are now starting to become evident.

### **It keeps getting better**

Bringas shares that the lessons she got from the interventions are significant. The interventions have helped her become a more effective leader – leading by example and setting expectations that her subordinates fully understand to guide performance. PAHRODF activities have also highlighted the value of teamwork and belongingness. “Team spirit is a key factor because of the importance of the good relations between and among employees and superiors,” she emphasises. As she sees it, no matter how difficult the work may be, it can be done if the team dynamics are good. She also views good service and eventually client satisfaction as a direct by-product of an engaged and empowered workforce.

Bringas feels that NAMRIA may still need assistance on several areas and is hopeful that PAHRODF will continue to be their partner for change and send more interventions their way. “They are very supportive once you have identified a particular need,” she says. After witnessing how the agency has developed and improved, partly as a result of PAHRODF interventions, it is understandable why she is already looking forward to the next one, which she hopes will be on sustainability. This suggestion from Bringas, who has been with NAMRIA for almost four decades now, may be just what her agency needs.

*Concepcion Bringas, Chief Administration Officer of the Staff Support Services in NAMRIA, was one of the participants for the HR/OD intervention on Leadership Strengthening and Competency Building for NAMRIA.*