

Building the Capacity of Lanao del Norte's HRMO Through Coaching



PAHRODF
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Human Resource and
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As one of the major contributors to the development of Mindanao, the province of Lanao del Norte has been focusing its efforts on the province's priority reforms to achieve its Vision 2020, which includes the Sustainable Local Road Management. This priority agenda is supported by the Provincial Road Management Facility (PRMF), a joint project of the Government of Australia and the Government of the Philippines to improve road infrastructure and local governance in Southern Philippines.

To up the ante of the local government's performance, the province upgraded its Human Resource Management Office (HRMO), transforming it from a small unit in the Provincial Administrators Office to a full-blown HR department. This new direction means the HRMO will perform more tasks than its usual personnel functions. As a department, they are now expected to provide human resource management and development services to support the province's priority programs.

Recognising the need to strengthen the HRMO's capacity to support this shift, the Facility conducted a coaching intervention for HRMO staff.

CASE STUDY

EUGINIE PUSING

Provincial Government of Lanao del Norte



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Recognising the need to strengthen the HRMO's capacity to support this shift, the Facility conducted a coaching intervention for HRMO staff. This intervention is unique, as it engages an HR coach to mentor HRMO staff daily and help them improve its structures, processes and systems within six months.

Eugenie Pusing, HRMO department head, said her team was initially hesitant about the idea of having a coach. The coach, after all, will be staying at their office, doing a hands-on job. But after the first few weeks of the intervention's run, Eugenie and her team saw the benefits of having a coach, and they unanimously changed their mind: "At first we thought the coach will dictate things to us and will just give us additional workload. But we realised our coach has actually made our lives so much easier!" said Eugenie.

From transactional to strategic

The Facility's coach mentored Eugenie on how to strategically lead her team to enable them to handle the greater tasks before them. With bulk of the work given to the HRMO, their challenge was the size of the team. The team was lean with 10 staff catering to around 1000 employees. Through the coach's guidance, Eugenie and her team crafted the HRMO's vision, mission, goals and strategies, and defined the job description of the team members.

"Now we have focus and clear delineation of tasks among the staff. Before it takes us time to process transactions because there was no clear process: "Whose responsibility is this? Where should this go?" With the help of our coach, we were able to delegate tasks and identify processes so our transactions will go smoothly," said Eugenie.

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Investing on your staff

Eugenie has been the HR head of Lanao del Norte for seven years, but she said it was the first time she received coaching from an HR expert. By carefully observing how her coach thinks, works, and recommends strategies, she was motivated to be more strategic especially now that she leads the finalisation of Lanao del Norte's HRD plan.

"I learned that we should not implement programs just for the sake of having activities. We should be strategic. Right now we are constantly reviewing the findings of our organisational assessment so that we'll be able to come up with relevant ideas that will respond to certain issues," said Eugenie.

Becoming a mentee allowed Eugenie to appreciate the value of mentoring. This experience has encouraged her to become a coach to her staff as well. In fact, Eugenie has even encouraged other department heads to invest in their staff through coaching. Conducting one-on-one sessions, she has learned, has the power to make positive impact to individual performance, leading to better public service.

"With coaching I became more open to learnings. It is really important that everyone – regardless of age – has someone to look up to as mentor. So I try to apply what I have learned from my coach in coaching my staff. I coach them, not because I think I am better than them, but because I experienced the value of having someone guiding and building me up. Coaching is not about commanding people to follow orders from you, but about enhancing their competencies," said Eugenie.

She added: "Because of this intervention, we now welcome opportunities to learn because we have seen its benefits – in my professional growth, in our office's improvement, and ultimately in the Provincial Government of Lanao del Norte."