



# Case Study 4

## HR/OD Intervention Focus: Change Management for CSC

### Developing Competencies and Influencing Bureaucracy

Having competent public servants is the ultimate goal of the Civil Service Commission (CSC). With the support of the Commission and other key agencies, Regional Director Karin Zerna, who has been with the commission for more than two decades, believes this is achievable.

Several years ago, the Commission was not even aware of what it needed to improve on. With assistance from PAHRODF, CSC officials and employees have been able to identify what the Commission lacks and create a roadmap to achieve its vision of capacitating public servants.

“We consider the entry of PAHRODF to the Commission as a blessing, because for so long, we have been so focused on the technical aspects of our job that we did not focus on developing ourselves. It helps a lot that we are being developed, because we are also helping develop the competencies of the entire bureaucracy,” she shares.

### The building blocks

Explaining the four-stage intervention offered by the Facility, Director Zerna says, “I think I should start from the beginning. Before the interventions were given, we were subjected to an organisational assessment. Lots of gaps were discovered and consequently, interventions were implemented starting with the 3rd-level regional directors and assistant regional directors, all the way down to the division chiefs. Currently, we are targeting the technical personnel.”

Director Zerna likewise sought to fill her own "gaps" by setting her personal goal: “to be more competent on the job and be able to accomplish the goals and mission of the Commission, and to ensure that Regional Office VII delivers on all its targets.”

The ongoing intervention which started in 2011 covers the four disciplines of execution. The first dealt with coaching; the second tackled change management, organisational development, and appreciative inquiry; the third was on leadership and coaching brand; and the fourth, which has yet to be implemented, will focus on another aspect of managing change.

The objective of the intervention was to develop CSC's focus and competence to meet, deliver and accomplish all the agency goals. In particular, the intervention touched on positively influencing the bureaucracy to adopt the change initiatives and the strategic performance management system of the Commission especially with the implementation and rollout of the Program to Institutionalise Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME HRM). After the intervention, employees seemed to be noticeably more focused, more conscious of the fact that before they go out, they have to prepare well and learn how to deal with other government agencies better.

In the course of all these interventions, the alliances formed by CSC with the different partners – PAHRODF, the Learning Service Providers (LSP) and the various agencies – had been happy ones. Director Zerna describes her experience with PAHRODF as liberating and the Learning Service Providers as the best in their field. She shares, "PAHRODF, from the onset, made it clear that they were there to provide the support and help needed for everyone in the Commission to be competent and for these learnings to be cascaded down to the whole bureaucracy. They emphasised that the CSC is the central human resource agency of the government and that it can really do a lot in terms of government services. As a result, employees feel confident with what they are doing and this shows in the way they deal with their client agencies and other government employees. As for the agency stakeholders, they are now aware that the CSC has ongoing initiatives and they now see us as an agency they can turn to with the needed competence to help them out."

### **Partnership building**

Taking off from their 2012 strategic objective, which is to build and strengthen partnerships, Director Zerna could not help but zero in on an area she felt needed a boost: partnership building. Her REAP focused on the creation of a Multi-Sectoral Government Council (MSGC) which not only answers her own personal goal of improving her weak spot based on her competency assessment, but also the CSC's need to inform and engage key agencies.

She further points out that because of the many changes and initiatives that are being implemented, it has become necessary for the Commission to attend to people's readiness to embrace these changes. "We need to help our employees embrace the changes that are happening and the fact that those changes are happening all at the same time."

Having the MSGC in place, according to Director Zerna, enables the Commission to tap the services of individuals and groups that could help the agency meet its targets and convince other government agencies to accept the change initiatives. "I also involved my staff because they have a regional division that is in charge of liaising with other government agencies and the private sector," she explains.

In implementing her REAP, Director Zerna happily shares that this was relatively easy and she was able to do so within a month after the intervention, with no real obstacles standing in her way. "In the implementation of the REAP, there was really no problem in so far as identifying who would be invited to be members of our MSGC. All we needed was to send out invitations, prepare the agenda and we made sure that we introduced what CSC is all about to all potential members of MSGC."

The only niggling point, she reveals, is getting all members of the MSGC to attend all the meetings. “We cannot expect all the members to have perfect attendance in all our meetings. We only set four meetings in a year but we cannot expect all of them to have perfect attendance.” To resolve this, they have asked for members to identify their permanent representatives to attend in their stead when necessary.

Apart from this, she is left with simple coordinating issues with partner agencies which do not seem too much of a hurdle at this time. A case in point is when a proposal was made to the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to ask their help in monitoring the implementation of CSC decisions. While DILG’s Regional Director had no problems supporting the CSC, a request was made to ask the CSC to formally ask that DILG assist in the implementation. “We have reported this to the Commission and this had been addressed,” she adds.

### **Supporting change initiatives**

With the MSGC’s presence, Director Zerna is hopeful that they will get more support for the CSC, especially with what they have committed to deliver. To illustrate, she mentions how CSC’s accomplishments do not seem to be picked up or noticed by media. “Not all our activities find their way to the news. CSC is not controversial. So we asked the media personalities whom we invited and who have agreed to be members of MSGC to help us with features about CSC and what we are doing, especially the change initiatives we are implementing.”

Director Zerna also does not hide the fact that she is banking on the full support of the different government agencies invited to the MSGC. “Whatever their mandate is, they can help us in

wherever they can support our efforts and our targets.” Citing an example, she talks about the strategic performance management system that all government agencies are supposed to adapt. “We have a target of 100%, by 2014 but not all Local Government Units are ready for it. So we have to present our program to the DILG Regional Director and hope for their support.”

She notes, though, that positive reactions have already been received from Regional Offices III and VII. Through a resolution of the Regional Development Council, Region III has adopted the strategic performance management system in all the agencies within its jurisdiction. The development in Region VII is even more encouraging. By supporting CSC’s anti-red tape campaign, she believes that this will prepare the agencies for the forthcoming report card survey and DILG’S Good Governance Award.

On the whole, Director Zerna relates that the PAHRODF interventions have helped the Commission in a big way. Employees of the Commission have already been developed and have gained the necessary competencies. The gaps discovered in 2010-2011 are constantly being addressed. Achieving the Commission’s goal of developing credible and competent servants translates into the accomplishment of their ultimate target to be recognised as the centre of excellence for strategic Human Resource and Organisational Development in Asia.

*Karin Zerna, CSC Regional Director, was among the participants of the HR/OD intervention on Change Management for CSC.*