



## Case Study 25

HR/OD Intervention Focus: Human  
Resource Management

### Transforming HRD as a Strategic Partner

Florence Acle, who has been with the National Mapping and Resource Information Agency's (NAMRIA) for 17 years and is currently the Officer-in-Charge of its Human Resource Development (HRD) Section, is a witness to the transformative growth of her organisation.

Acle saw how the HRD Section transitioned from being a procedural and administrative group to being a strategic unit.

As a pioneer scholar of the Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS) in the Philippines, she recounts how PAHRODF's partnership with NAMRIA started in 2007. "PAHRODF was the one who approached NAMRIA," she recalls. That got the ball rolling. The Facility started with an assessment and found that a gap that needs to be addressed was in the area of capacitating HRD managers. In line with this, Acle was selected to pursue a master's degree in Human Resource Management at Griffith University.

Acle is full of appreciation for her learnings from the scholarship and the support she received from PAHRODF and her university. "We are pioneer Australia Awards scholars under HRODF. We are lucky because we represent NAMRIA's non-technical scholars," she says.

She says of the Facility: "I had a good experience with the Facility. We have a strong partnership with PAHRODF that started back in 2007 and it continues up to today." Acle shares how much she has interacted and worked with the Facility, particularly with the assessments that were conducted prior to the actual interventions. She also has praises for the Learning Service Providers (LSPs) engaged by the Facility to assist NAMRIA. She shares, "They are highly qualified and are extremely accommodating."

She similarly praises Griffith University for its high educational standards, good facilities, and most importantly, the mentoring provided by her seasoned professors. "We were able to experience world-class education," she gushes.

## Implementing an action plan

Acle explains, "The goal of the scholarship provided to me is to gain competency in human resource management and development." After her scholarship, she pursued a REAP which was originally titled "Developed and Enhanced Competencies of Human Resource." It aimed to transform HR practices and activities in NAMRIA from being from procedural to being strategic. She declares, "We wanted to transform the HRD section to assume a more strategic role. And we did."

Acle admits that the successful implementation of her REAP did not come without difficulty. "There were too many activities happening. NAMRIA experienced a lot of changes. We went through an International Organisation for Standardisation accreditation process, we installed a Strategic Performance Management System, we went through rationalisation, and so on. On top of all these, we had to ensure that our REAPs are still being implemented. Time management was our response to these challenges," she shares.

NAMRIA's full support guaranteed that Acle's REAP would be accomplished. "We had management support, resources, and logistics. Our supervisors were there too for moral support. Expert advice was provided by PAHRODF," she says. She further explains that they were even able to engage the services of a consultant to help them with their competency-based HR system. They also had several workshops, consulted with experts to establish their core competencies, and undertook competency profiling that became the basis of their HRD Plan. All these initiatives seemed to have paid off as she reports that all their systems have been fully operational and running smoothly since 2008.

## The changing landscape

Looking back at where they were before their partnership with the Facility and where they are now, Acle is proud about how much has changed. The impact has been considerable. All the PAHRODF interventions had a positive effect on NAMRIA's human resource management as well as on Acle.

Acle claims, "Back in 2007, the HRD Division was different. We assumed a purely administrative and procedural role. When PAHRODF came, big changes occurred. We became a strategic unit. We have partnerships with line departments and they now recognise our contribution towards achieving the strategic goals of NAMRIA. Because of the interventions, we became more responsive."

She also details how training their HRD Division personnel on information technology such as the Human Resource Information System (HRIS) has helped ease some of the manual work that they used to do, with attendance as a case in point. "We were able to acquire HRIS so we have been able to do away with the different kinds of monitoring such as attendance, and so it's less paperwork." She happily notes that with this taken care of, they have been able to attend to more value-added services and strategic programmes instead.

On recruitment and promotion, Acle mentions that before the implementation of the enhanced competency tools, NAMRIA's was solely based on the civil service criteria, as mandated by the Civil Service Commission. The introduction of the competency-based system (CBS) established a clear blueprint for recruitment, performance evaluation, and career advancement paths that also factored in competency. Acle explains, "Before, we didn't have

criteria. Well, we have the usual civil service criteria but it's not competency-based. On top of the civil service criteria, we now have the CBS, which makes the decisions of the managers, more or less, objective and more based on competency."

Likewise, she shares that their programs are more targeted. Although they have developed the CBS manual, she notes that it is a continuing process. "We are integrating or implementing a competency base in human resource management. We are developing the CBS tools so we can be more strategic," she adds.

On Acle's part, the scholarship has definitely primed her to take on a change agent role through her REAP. Opening up a whole new world for Acle, her scholarship and her exposure to the facility has groomed her to become a more collaborative leader as she shares her acquired skills and know-how.

### **People development**

Acle shares that the strategic direction of their section hasn't really veered with the passage of time. She says that what was envisioned before – for competencies in human resource to be developed so they can take on more strategic goals – is essentially still the same. Towards this end, they have continued to pursue more opportunities for training, learning and improvement. "I think we're on the right path, given the right interventions, the right guidance from PAHRODF because after the grant, it doesn't stop there," she maintains.

Although for Acle, HRDS' impact is more internal, their efforts definitely form the backbone of the agency, contributing greatly to how NAMRIA benefits the public at large. The value of 'people development,' as she puts it, cannot be diminished, with her section now addressing the strategic requirements of the organisation.

Developing experts in global, geospatial, geographic information systems and remote sensing, among others, the agency unmistakably cuts through modern living without us even knowing it. With PAHRODF helping to change the landscape of NAMRIA, our sociopolitical-economic landscape changes as well, and that, is clearly a good thing.

*Florence Acle finished her Masters in Human Resource Management from Griffith University in 2008. Her REAP focused on Competency Enhancement of Personnel Manpower Development Section (PMDS) Personnel in NAMRIA*