

Integrating Case Study

Push Forward From Down Under

Insights and Assessments from
Scholars of the Australian Awards
and

Participants of the PAHRODF
Interventions in the Philippines

It Only Gets Better

“Better” is the keyword. An empowered and motivated human resource...an efficient plan and implementation...an enhanced monitoring...a more responsive and accurate service... and a smoother and improved system...these are the route and sure roads to institutional

reform and national development. This is precisely the desired outcome of the scholarships and interventions the Philippines get from Australia.

The Australian government is one of the countries giving the Philippines the “friendly push” towards national development. Every year since 2010, the Australian government thru the Philippine Australia Human Resource and Organisational Development Facility or PAHRODF sends scholars to Australia for further studies and conducts intervention in order to pave the way for individual, for institutional and ultimately, for national development. Individuals who were sent to the land down under or have gone an extensive training come back with broader and better perspectives, then they implement better ways to deliver government and institutional services. With competent and capable individual and institutions in place in the Philippines, there is no other way to go but upwards and forward.

“Each one of us is a better version of our former selves”, declares Atty. Gina Wenceslao of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and one of the scholars sent in further studies under PAHRODF. This is affirmed by Assistant Secretary Jess Mateo of the Department of Education (DEPED) referring to his observations of the beneficiaries of the interventions and scholarships. He emphasised that the most significant take-away from the grant is the “change in perspective” and the “shift in behaviour and mindset”. Asec. Mateo continues: “It has a positive impact on them [the scholars and participants]...the way they carry themselves, the way they think.” He makes an interesting point that the scholars can be the catalysts and then cascade the new-found motivation and mindset across the institution.

Having better and improved individuals in our government institutions is assurance that an efficient and effective system is in on its way. Witnessing improved government systems and services is highly indicative of good governance. And with good governance at hand, national progress is not far behind. Bing Santamaria from the Provincial Government of Aklan sees the value of this excellence chain. She shares, “If you look at the whole of it, good governance will alleviate poverty. And one of the ways government employees can help do this is by delivering excellent service which will result in the development of the lives of the constituents.”

PAHRODF as Partner All the Way

Support for capacity and competency for institutional development and nation building are the operative words of PAHRODF or the Philippine Australia Human Resources and Organisational Development Facility. Unwavering and unfaltering at that, the scholars and participants claim that the “facility was supportive and accommodating in every step” . . . before, during and even after the grant. PAHRODF, in ensuring organisational and individual improvement, offers overseas scholarships and interventions that include identifying the needed competencies and capabilities; followed by customised trainings, coaching and advisory supports.

Sylvia Esperanza of the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) detailed, “With PAHRODF, even before the start of the scholarship. . . gave us guidance on what to do.”

From any employee’s standpoint, it is never an easy task to point out inefficiencies, offer solutions and sell the idea to top management as well as implement among the rank and file. And the challenge is even more daunting with the deeply-entrenched systems in the government. Some will be met with resistance, with raised brows, will be ignored, and sometimes, even taken as offensive and insubordination by superiors. To these constraints, PAHRODF was “listening” and even acts out as intermediaries. Leah Mejias of the Department of Social Welfare and Development says, “They [PAHRODF] are very good listeners. They don’t close the doors when we need to expand the conversation on how DSWD is currently operating. We had many consultations just so they could capture the context of the organisation.”

Attesting to PAHRODF’s reputation as generous and flexible, Efen Carandang of NAMRIA and grantee of the Intervention expounds on the agency’s good experience with PAHRODF. According to Mr. Carandang, even when they have to change their plans along the way, they were still accommodated.

Dr. Cynthia Celebre of the Philippine Atmospheric and Geophysical and Atmospheric Services Administration (PAGASA) lauds PAHRODF for its approach. Dr. Celebre commented that, “The intervention that they were going to conduct with PAGASA was institutional-based and not

individual-based. It is the best thing that PAHRODF can offer the agency because it will really improve the competency of the agency leaders.”

Director Karin Zerna of the Civil Service Commission gladly talked about the Commission’s productive partnership with PAHRODF. Director Zerna cites, “PAHRODF made sure we understood they were there to provide support/help that was needed for us to be competent, so that we could cascade it (the learning) down to the whole bureaucracy. . . We now feel confident about what we are doing. . .”

Asec. Mateo of the DepEd says that PAHRODF helps in the training and capacity building needs analysis of the DepEd. After determining this, they facilitated programs to address the knowledge, training and skills gaps.

The Schools and Learning Service Providers

Credited for the new skills, knowledge and perspectives of the scholars are the schools and the learning service providers assigned to them by PAHRODF. The general sentiment of the scholars is amazement for their knowledgeable professors, consultants and mentors and the facilities.

The School. “My university is amazing. Most of the resources are there. It has advanced technology and the environment is very conducive to learning.” So quips Ms. Silvia Esperanza which echoes the sentiment of fellow scholars sent to Australian universities for further studies. The scholars are at awe with the educational institutions they were placed in for its high standards, state-of-the-art facilities and expert and highly specialized professors. “We were able to experience world-class education,” so says Florence Acle of NAMRIA.

The scholars are grateful for the presence of support teams to help them cope with the technology and tasks at hand. Director Jing Deco of the Civil Service Commission is particularly

happy with her university as well as her mentors for their “open door policy”. She cites, “If you have any questions, anything that you might need, there are really point persons there that can guide you.”

The source, facilitation and flow of learning are what the scholars appreciated the most. They were given mentors and professors who are expert in their fields. Some were even literally brought out to the fields. The facilities and technologies were also available for them to truly grasp the knowledge being imparted to them.

Learning Service Providers. High regard is also given to the learning service providers or LSPs.

Dr. Celebre finds the service providers as “being professional, friendly and giving their best.” She adds that: “If you trust your provider, you give the best that you have and also learn what you can get from the training.”

Bing Santamaria who is from the human resource office of the Provincial Government of Aklan says they, being in government, do not usually hire learning service providers due to costs but she is grateful for the consultants assigned to them. She says, “We had the best...all very excellent and patient consultants. We did not just learn the how to’s but the complete thing for when the intervention is over and the system is installed.”

Although Director Rene Solidum of the Philippine Volcanology and Seismology (PHILVOCS) finds the LSPs excellent, he aired some recommendations. Director Solidum elaborates, “You really have to match the group that you’re helping with the learning service provider, so that’s one. For us, since we’re a technical organisation (PHILVOCS), the facilitators must be technical writers so that they can grasp and present better the things that we want to say.”

Asec. Mateo of DEPED gives the LSPs an excellent rating of ten (10). He attributes this rating to their listening ear. He lauds their ability to put everything into consideration to come up with relevant programs.

The Outcome of the Intervention and Scholarship

Individual. Now armed with both the wisdom of previous experience and innovative ideas acquired from the advanced studies and training, the recipients are more confident, competitive and motivated as a person.

Officials like Dr. Celebre (PAGASA) and Director Zerna (CSC) have set goals for themselves. Director Zerna wanted to gain more competence “and be able to accomplish the goals and mission of the commission, and to ensure that Region 7 delivers on all its targets.” The driven Dr. Celebre said she wanted to improve her leadership skills in order to lead her staff well.

Dr. Celebre recounts her negotiations with the Mayors of Palawan and Matnog to install metbouys in the areas as a project of the Advance Science and Technology Institute. She said she owes her “increased self-confidence” and “newfound sense of authority” to the Leadership Intervention of PAHRODF.

Ms. Marissa Ceneta of Civil Service Commission (CSC) has been an HR practitioner and implementer for more than 20 years but lacks the know-how in managing and introducing projects or programs to government bureaucracy. Ceneta is now thankful for the PAHRODF intervention program for the expansion of her HR practice.

Because of PAHRODF scholarship program, Director Deco felt she is more equipped to contribute to the commission’s strategic plans and become an active player in putting them into action. She adds that, “It wasn’t difficult to adjust and bring back what I learned because actually, the programs of the commission have already pipelined what we learned in Australia.”

An agent of change is how Florence Acle of sees herself at NAMRIA post scholarship. Her REAP is her tool and armour to implement the improvement at the agency.

Organisation. The heart of the human resources and organisational development practice is to ensure that the right people with the right skills are placed to contribute to growth of the organisation. The common thrust among scholars' REAP is to make the organisation work by making its people more participative than passive.

Thru the PAHRODF program the scholars and participants have increased their competencies and are now better equipped to help improve institutional capability. With an aligned goal across all the departments and a strategic HR and OD, more efficient system is at hand.

One important point spelled out was making the people part of the strategy not just marshals of the plan. Director Solidum remarked that, "the intervention of PAHRODF was very important because I could have dictated what I wanted for the office...the strategic plan was almost the same from the things that I wanted...because they had undergone the process, now they feel that they own the plan."

On the experience of the CSC thru Director Zerna, she said PAHRODF and its officials provided support needed for CSC to be competent. PAHRODF recognized that the civil service commission is the central human resource agency of the government. Availing of the Intervention made people at the commission, says. Dr. Zerna "feels confident about what we are doing, and it shows in the way we are dealing with our client agencies, as well as other government employees."

She added that the agency stakeholders are "now aware that the agency has certain initiatives that are on-going, and they now see us as an agency they can go to with the competence to help them out."

At NAMRIA, the changes were felt with regards to the agency's role. If before, NAMRIA takes the hidden-backseat role and merely existing, they have now a vital role in development planning. Their value now is better realized and the agency is more responsive. And they also have the tools and technology at hand to keep up with the tasks. NAMRIA thru the Intervention also availed of the Human Resource Information System which makes the monitoring of personnel an easier task.

Society. When what the individual undertakes then the institution adapts and implements; and ultimately become contributory to everyday life or make a difference in the life of the majority, the total cycle of the PAHRODF objective and the Australian government's vision is achieved.

To make a major impact on the Filipino society and substantially contribute to the Philippines' nation building is the desired end-result of each of the Re-entry Action Plan or REAP of the scholars. Since most of the REAP are in the infancy stage and some are waiting funding, societal impact is probably at minimum and not yet visible.

Example to this is the REAP of Mr. Carandang from NAMRIA. He points out that people tend to overlook the importance of maps and NAMRIA's role. He justified this by citing that eighty percent (80%) of decisions made by government, business, and even ordinary people are location based. He further cited that: "... the more location information people have, the better decisions they make. Even simple things like planning where to go and how to get there are made easier if you have the right map. The more detailed (it is), the better the decision."

The most evidently improved government service is the weather monitoring and forecasting. And the goal of one of the scholars, Anselmo Almazan of PAGASA is to provide the marginalized Filipinos and those in the remote areas alternative ways to know the weather. This way is non-reliant of the written weather bulletins issued by the agency but by local folks who can simply read their natural environment.

REAP-ing the Benefits

To ensure that significant improvement takes place after the advance studies and training, both scholars to the Australian Awards and participants of the Interventions came up with action plans. Combining both the established awareness of internal systems of the organisation and the fresh learnings acquired from either the scholarship or the intervention, they formulated their respective Re-Entry Action Plans or REAPs.

Dr. David Dutton, Deputy Head of Mission of the Australian Embassy describe the REAP as “an innovative mechanism of the scholarship program in the Philippines to ensure awardees are able to use what they have learned to initiate genuine positive changes in their workplaces and in society”

The Re-Entry Action Plan or REAP of a few are done and being replicated in their counterpart offices. But most scholars and participants are either half way done, others have just started due to the revisions and adjustments while others are waiting for fund releases.

REAPed from the Scholarship

Civil Service and Local Governance Institutions. One batch of CSC scholars led by Director

Deco decided on a collective and singular Re-entry Action Plan (REAP). This was to ensure that efforts are coordinated, goals are aligned, its impact is cascaded throughout the country and “create the desired change in a more concerted way”.

A flagship program is the Prime HRM which targets to put premium efforts on the areas of: recruitment and selection; performance management; rewards and recognition; and learning and development. This program will be implemented across the country.

Atty. Wenceslao’s REAP on enhancing performance management has just taken off recently. She had to expand the coverage of her program.

Eumir Atienza from the Provincial Government of Aklan action plan is the financial projection of Aklan’s economic department. Under the economic department are: three hospitals, an academic centre for nurses, the quarry, sand and gravel services and the jetty port.

Berne Silawan of the Provincial Government of Davao Del Norte, made a very interesting REAP called a GIS Based Road Maintenance Prioritization Model. Using the technologically advanced skills and techniques he acquired on mapping, he made a computerized mapping model of the roads in Davao del Norte. Because they can now monitor the roads as well their conditions, this

proved helpful in for the provincial planning and the engineering division to decide on which project to prioritise.

With the aim to provide a manual of work flow within the Provincial Engineering Office or PEO of Guimaras, Ramil Villasis decided the output of his REAP to be the re-organisation of the PEO. In achieving his objectives and in promoting a sense of ownership, Villasis tried to involve his colleagues in the implementation.

Education Institutions. Toni Fernandez admits that the “School of the Future” or SOF pre-existed prior to her scholarship so her REAP is more of a curriculum review. Despite widespread community acceptance and PTA support, her advocacy is for SOF to gain recognition and accreditation from the education department as a special program rather than a teaching strategy.

The REAP of Dexter Pante (DEPEd) is a two-week Rapid Assessment of education programs. It yielded positive results leading to the improvement in the design of several programs and projects as well out strike out any duplication or overlapping of programs.

Ms. Antonia Alhambra also of the education department, came up with a monitoring and documentation manual. This proved useful for the agency’s current school building program. She said the manual “served as an eye of the Central Office”. They are now just macro-monitoring and overseeing that the building plans and specification are followed.

Science and Technology Institutions. Dr. Esperanza also of NAMRIA focused her REAP on vulnerability mapping through the development of automated tools with a standard procedure across all eighty one (81) provinces in the Philippines. She wanted this at NAMRIA to “avoid inconsistencies and can produce a more accurate output”. Her REAP is in place and is being used in the agency since 2013.

Mary Jane Montemor of NAMRIA says she was halfway done with the manual for the database management system when she left for her scholarship. On her return, she had to expand her REAP to align it to the goals of her office, cater to the needs of the office and upgrade to the

new system. With the changes incorporated and considered, she has accomplished fifty percent (50%) of her REAP.

The goal of Angelo Arboleda is to help his department deliver better software for the distribution of geospatial information to the public. Arboleda states: "Basically, when I returned, what I did was to implement what we call the source code management system. This helps us to track the quality of the software we are producing. It is essential in helping NAMRIA reach its goal of delivering what we call timely, accessible and accurate geospatial information."

Anselmo Almazan of PAGASA got fascinated with the weather readings through the Indigenous Knowledge System or IKS and was surprised that this is recognised by the Bureau of Meteorology in Australia despite being technologically equipped. As the rest of the world incorporates technology in their way of doing things, Almazan thought of those back in the Philippines who do not have access to it--those who are part of the marginalized sector and from the remote areas. He knew that Filipinos have the aptitude for this kind of skill, however laid back and pre-historic it sounds. Almazan knew that Filipino's "anito-worshipping" ancestors have laid the ground for this with their "intimate relationship with the environment". His REAP on alternative weather readings will be based on the changes in animal behaviour and the environment. The project's take off got moved from last year to middle of this year due to the delay in the release of funds.

Mabelline Cahulogan of PHIVOLCS did a research paper titled Mindanao Fault as Revealed by Seismic Reflection Sections in Cotabato Basin and Risk Assessment in Sultan Kudarat Province using Remotely Sensed Imageries. Besides being from the region, she said she used Mindanao as her area of study as it is difficult to go there due to peace and order concern and it is a good opportune time to study it via a technological tool like remotely sensor imagery. According to Cahulogan though, this is for now just a research paper and as a REAP not yet to be implemented as the institute's priorities are the active faults.

REAPed from the Intervention

Civil Service and Local Governance Institutions. Director Zerna also of CSC says

implementing her REAP was "relatively easy" and was able to do it within a month after intervention. The Multi-sectoral Government Council or MSGC is the brainchild of Dir. Zerna. She feels that if the MSGC is in place, the commission can tap external services to help achieve the agency's targets.

Director Aquino also of CSC aimed for the sustainability of the CSI brand as her REAP. According to her: "...the essence of our re-entry action plan (is) to maintain the CSI brand which includes not only the logo, the tagline but everything that goes with the training. Beginning from the training collaterals... to training delivery up to evaluation. All these comprise the total brand of the CSI."

Noel Duarte of DILG came up with a training package for NEO or Newly Elected Officials derived from his learning during the leadership intervention. Included in his package are local legislations and local development. At the conclusion of the Barangay Elections he revised his package and conducted BAGAD Training Package or Barangay Agenda for Governance and Development.

Levi Fiestada of DILG Romblon aimed at formulating a strategy to better communicate and gain appreciation of the DILG programs to its stakeholders. This program's implementation needs enlistment of the field officer and getting people together is in itself a challenging task.

Also from the Provincial Government of Aklan (PGA), Santamaria's REAP, after several fine-tuning, focused on identifying the competency gaps of all the departments in PGA and determine the intervention needed. She hopes that through her action plan more programs will take place that zero in on the needed competencies. At ninety percent (90%) of her action plan, she is done with the identification but is yet to do the clustering and packaging the plan.

Education Institutions. According to DEPED Asec. Mateo the REAP of the scholars and participants of PAHRODF helped them address specific gaps across the department. Although

he is not a participant to the interventions, he plays a key role in the implementation of the programs. He recognises the value of the REAP and supports the proponents by providing advice, manpower and resource support. "My role is to make sure that it fits the direction of the department and that the beneficiaries of the program are fully utilized", Asec. Mateo explains. He assured that because the REAP goes through him the program is aligned with departments goals and has management support all the way.

Science and Technology Institutions. Providing client satisfaction by building and fostering partnerships with external key stakeholders, as well as disseminating continuous information about NAMRIA, its functions, and its services---this is the REAP of Bringas of NAMRIA. She said that four units of the HR were commissioned to conduct surveys to determine the extent of NAMRIA's reach.

Dr. Celebre of PAGASA addresses two concerns for her REAP: the need to harmonize the technical and non-technical training programs, and to improve the current processes for awarding scholarships and fellowships. She wanted for the several trainings of personnel complement and harmonize in the workplace and that fellowships and scholarship are awarded to those who truly deserve them.

The REAP of Delfin Garcia from PHIVOLCS is a staff plan that will serve as the agency's bible for the next five to ten years. This also complements the action plan of Richel De Mesa which focuses disseminating PHIVOLCS' strategic plans and directions across all the personnel and staff of the institute. De Mesa has been implementing since end of 2012.

Up and Down Sides: Supporting and Hindering Factors to the REAP

When a soldier goes to war, he gets both a bruise and a badge. Like all endeavours, the REAP proponents faced both enabling and hindering factors.

Overall, the REAPs of the scholars and participants gained support and cooperation from the organisation's top management and most had to tweak the REAP in order to cater to the organisational needs and to align with the goals of their office. Budget constraints, resistance, organisational conflicts, priority and workload of the lead implementers are usually the hindering factors. Some of the initiatives even have to start with data gathering before they can fully proceed with the implementation.

Civil Service and Local Governance Institutions. Director Zerna of the CSC boasts of the positive reaction to the MSGC from Region 3 and 7. Region 3 she says, adopted the performance management system in the agencies under its jurisdiction. Region 7 supported the anti-red tape campaign. The major downside to her endeavour is getting all the Council members present in the meeting which she remedies by asking for a permanent representative to the MSGC.

A classic example of clog due to workload is experienced by Director Aquino. She says that her REAP implementation had to take a backseat due to competing concerns. Aware of voluminous amount of information and huge hat she has to take on, she is up for the creation of the CSC site to showcase the commission's image and services.

Funding is the concern of Atty. Wenceslao in order to implement her REAP. Although reaping the support of her superior and the enthusiasm of her colleagues, significant financial support is needed to implement performance management scheme which includes the design and creation of a balance card.

Mr. Atienza of Aklan says that his team are almost done with the financial projections of the jetty port. But this had not been an easy task for them. Since Atienza's team had to filter through the financial books which looks like an audit, the port personnel were on defensive stance. They are met with resistance and raised eyebrows.

Other than insufficient funds and manpower, Fiestada cites poor connectivity and limited gadgets like laptops and cameras as factors that "hampered work".

One significant challenge raised by Santamaria of the Provincial Government of Aklan is the change of local leadership every three (3) years. If a program takes more than a supportive leader's term of office, one is not assured that the successor will share the same interest.

Education Institutions. Funding and recognition are the struggles of Toni Fernandez for her School of the Future. However, Fernandez is driven as she gets support from the community and from the Parent Teachers Association in Iloilo which at one point supported her initiative for technology enhancement.

Aware of the value the REAP brings back to the personnel, to the department and to the quality of service they can offer to their stakeholders, DEDPED Asec Mateo says he critically reviews and "all the way" support the REAPs of scholars and participants from the department.

Dr. Jojo Fadul also of DEPED cites "distrust and clash of procedures and expectation" as the source of conflict in their regional branch. This is why she perceives that change is hard to introduce. Even the PAHRODF intervention are met with constraints and had to be pushed back due to academic schedules and election duties. Her REAP on coaching via clinical supervision was met with resistance with comments that it is no different from the teaching observation and evaluation the department conducts. Implementing her REAP anyway, she found the flaw in the content on how Math is taught and put in place a corrective measure. The result will be based on the Nation Achievement Test (NAT) scores in for 2015.

Science and Technology Institutions. NAMRIA now works under a twelve (12) point program. Thanks to Mr. Carandang and his REAP. With the annual budget allocation, the agency is proceeding with its activities in fulfilment of their long term plans.

Data gathering is a very tedious and difficult part of any program. Ms. Bringas is met with this challenge in implementing her REAP as it requires survey and feedback gathering. Ms. Bringas is met with a low return or below the 30% response rate. Sharing her sentiments, Ms. Bringas says: "It's very challenging getting the clients' feedback and conducting the right survey because we do not control the response rate. We send survey tools, the survey forms. But we don't know if they are going to return it to us."

Not to be daunted, Bringas addressed the constraints by conducting focus group discussion (FGDs) with incentives offer then handed out surveys. The upside she shares is the time, manpower and budget support management lends them.

Speeding things up at NAMRIA is the goal of Ms. Montemor. But this means changing the old ways. She pointed out the frowns she got with the software change that comes along with her program. The unlearning and re learning of the new tool was met with a bit of a struggle.

Although the management of NAMRIA was supportive, the amount of work required did get overwhelming at some point. Ms. Aclé saw the changes happening at NAMRIA left and right. According to her, "There were too many things going on . . . We had ISO and, then, SPMS, rationalization and so, on top of that, we had to ensure that our REAP was still being implemented."

Dr. Celebre points out the obstacles for her REAP implementation. These being, time constraints and the communication gap between the Research Development division under her which conducts technical courses and the Administrative division for the non-technical programs. Her key is reaching out to the other division and being persistent.

Almazan works in a world of science aided by technology for further discoveries. Anything without scientific explanation is considered absurd. Aside from the trouble securing budget for his REAP and its schedule delayed, he has dealt with resistance, scepticism and even became short of a laughing stock. He defended the IKS as merely a backup system or an alternative to the scientific methods especially for towns without electricity. Even beyond the organisation, Almazan was initially met with a cold shoulder which he addressed by establishing a closer relation to the community and partnering with the Municipal Disaster Risk Management officers. In return, he is now met with interests and enthusiasm.

An Insight: The Formula of Success is REAP equals REAP

To this day, it is difficult to identify the full impact of the REAP to the society but organisationally, an improved system is in place or is taking place. On top of that, an academically and knowledge enhanced personnel with a broader perspective is taking part.

One scholar captures the essence of it all, “PAHRODF is a key agency that helps scholars from the government or private sector so that they return with better competencies from foreign education that can help their respective offices and, eventually, the country.”

For now, the insights that could be derived from the case study of the scholars and the participants is the formula of success for both the approval and implementation of the re-entry action plan or REAP. Relating how in order to get approval, they had to adjust, revise and even change their action plan is an important consideration. Implementing the REAP became a totally new challenge. The acronym for this formula is also REAP which stands for replicability, ease, acceptance and participation.

Replicability. Knowledge and skills are meant to be shared as no person can run a project by himself. In order to assure success nation-wide, considering that the Philippines is an archipelagic country with eighty one (81) provinces to reach and one hundred million (100M) populace to serve, the key for the great impact is to cascade it through the bureaucracy. Such is the case of the DSWD, CSC and DILG. In these agencies, other departments and employees should be able to replicate or share the knowledge and skills with one another.

Mentioned several times over, the scholars and participants were tasked to cascade, echo, or spread the learnings they brought back with them along with their action plan. Especially if the REAP is aligned with the mother vision or a flagship program of the department like the Prime HRM of CSC, the program has to flow through the regional branches. The same goes with the REAP intended for a certain office. They are usually required to echo it on to counterpart offices so that quality service is spread across the regional branches of that particular department.

Villasis says he has been open to share with the personnel of the Guimaras PEO what he learned on project management, including the engineering tools that he has acquired has increased the competency of his people.

Mr Pante of the Department of Education whose REAP is the Rapid Assessment Program knows the importance of performance management. He is also aware of the lack of capacity of DEPED to conduct evaluation because there are only few who have the know-how. Pante took upon himself to initiate mentoring programs through brown bag sessions. This way, the knowledge is shared and can be trickled down to other levels of the department.

Replicating as well as sustaining the Competency Based Leadership Program or CBLP among DSWD regional branch counterparts was the exact challenge of Mejias.

Probably the best example where replication is vital is in the area of disaster risk reduction. According to Garcia of PHIVOLCS, the guideline on the activities emanates from the main office but they have to “capacitate” the people in the field manning twenty nine (29) seismic stations all over the Philippines--- distributed from Batanes to Zamboanga. He said that it is important that these front liners to the communities have the proper knowledge and skills as they will be the source of information to and from the area and towards the people.

Garcia also stressed the value of establishing a common appreciation of geo hazard maps not only within PHIVOLCS but even among LGUs. This has prompted him to initiate visits from Region 1 to Region 13 in order to talk to local government officials. He discussed with them the presence of an active volcano in their area or if their location is prone and vulnerable to earthquakes. This is he says is so that they will know what to expect and what to plan for. PHIVOLCS, as started with the REAP of Richel De Mesa, have all intervention learnings repeated and cascaded to the staff.

Ease. Realistic, simple and not too complicated is the key in order to put the plan into fruition. Most of the REAP had to be simplified. As it needs to be replicated the program and its process has to be easily understandable.

Dino Ponsaran (DILG) realised how much of an overwhelming work he will get himself into if he did not revise his REAP. Not only that it is ambitious, it is also costly for the office to implement. So he settled for the codification of local investments and incentives. Ponsaran satisfyingly says, “It is realistic and achievable because we can easily mainstream it to our operational plans and budget. Basically, the expected output is to enable local government units to codify their local investments and incentive codes.”

Acceptance. One of the frequent issues that plague the REAPs was the resistance among co-workers and even management. Fernandez and his SOF still struggles at being recognized by the education department. Alamazan had quite a challenge selling the IKS to colleagues. The key to this is emphasising the value of the work and the impact of its outcome. Predicting what nature will throw upon us is no laughing matter. And if such measures like looking at animal behaviour, checking river patterns and noting soil cracks will save lives from natural calamities, then it must be considered serious business.

Making people step out of their comfort zone or introducing a new way of doing things can also deter acceptability. But if this will speed things around at NAMRIA or will yield high scores for NAT takers in Davao, there should be little reason not to go through the changes.

Participation. No endeavour will become successful without the support of the fellow workers, the department, whole bureaucracy and especially key implementers and stakeholders. Director Deco makes a good point when she said, “We’re trying to rid ourselves of the compliance approach. Rather, there should be ownership for these agencies to really embrace what we are offering them.”

Participation is key to change. A good case example of this is shared by Ms. Josie Rabanoz from the Provincial Government of Davao del Norte. Rabanoz appreciated the significance of the PAHRODF intervention on change management. It is instrumental in making their department heads act more cohesively and conduct their works more effectively. She went on to say that even their stakeholders like people organisations and non-government organisations are part of the provincial monitoring committee.

Villasis shared his experience at Guimaras as he took an extra step to involve the community and making them feel “certain level of ownership of the project and know what to expect.”

Dr. Solidum, who sees the value of involving every one, makes an interesting point when he said that the leader should first really take the time to explain and make people understand. This kind of institutional culture is lauded by Richel de Mesa. She shared: “PHILVOCS now has clear organisational directions and then based on that organisational direction, every staff knows how he fits into that or how he contributes to the organisational direction . . . everybody sees the big picture and how they fit in to that picture.”

Fiestada’s communication strategy which aims to better cascade the programs of the DILG is testament to the need to subscribe to the REAP formula of success. Fiestada elaborates that “they needed to make it (means of communicating) appealing and easily understandable, so the agency’s programs can be fully appreciated.”

This also validates the first three (3) items of the formula which are replicability, ease, and acceptance as pre-requisites to encourage participation. For how can one encourage participation when people do not understand the process or feel that it is not applicable to them or they do not buy the idea because they do not see the value of it?