

THE CIVIL SERVICE REPORTER

GAWING LINGKOD BAYANI ANG BAWAT KAWANI

Volume 61 No.3

3rd Quarter 2020 Issue

CIVIL SERVICE REPORTER

**TECHNOLOGY,
MALASAKIT, TAKE
CENTER STAGE ON
THIS YEAR'S
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION**

**PUBLIC SECTOR IN THE AGE OF
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

**Spotlight on early adopters of
digital transformation**
Rules in filling up frontliner
positions eased

**Shifting HR practices
in the time of COVID-19**

**Pandemic-Proof: Essential
Competencies for the
Public Sector Leader**
How communication
can **sustain employee
engagement** and
wellbeing

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05
Public Domain
06
From the Chairperson's
Desk
07
Contributors

What's inside?

NEWS

8 Rules in filling up frontliner positions eased

9 CSC sets interim appointment rules

10 Regional cooperation amid COVID-19 pandemic sought

REGIONAL NEWS

11 Unhindered transit, paid quarantine leave for returning gov't scholars

Claim your terminal leave benefit – CSC

12 CSC RO I screens entries to the Covid-19 themed Online Photo and Amateur Video-Making Contests

13 CSC RO II navigates the 'new normal' with ICT

14 DENR XII undergoes PRIME-HRM Orientation

CITIZEN'S GUIDE

15 A refresher on online government services you can access while on quarantine

18 Pagpupugay sa Wikang Filipino sa Panahon ng Pagbabagong Dihital

OUTLOOK

19 Journey to the New Normal

COVER STORY

21 Awit ng Lingkod Bayani

22 I am a Public Servant


23 Technology, *Malasakit*, take center stage in this year's anniversary celebration

30th PHILIPPINE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNIVERSARY

What's inside?


EXECUTIVE LETTER

29
Strengthening the Civil Service Under the New Normal



HR SPOTLIGHT

33
Shifting HR practices in the time of COVID-19
What does the HR landscape look like now and in a post-pandemic world? (Part 2 of 2)




37
Pandemic-Proof: Essential Competencies for the Public Sector Leader

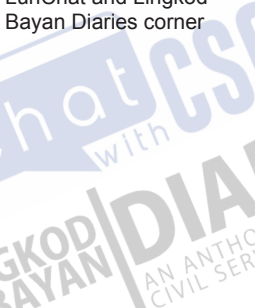
39
Staying the Course: How PIDS dealt with the COVID-19 crisis and what kept them afloat

LINGKOD BAYANI

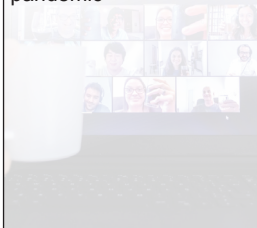
41
CSC Pagasa Awardees: Spotlight on early adopters of digital transformation




43
LunChat and Lingkod Bayan Diaries corner



47
Connecting with colleagues during the COVID-19 pandemic




49
Mindfulness Wellness Session



HEALTH and WELLNESS at WORK

45
Work under alternative work arrangements: How communication can sustain employee engagement and wellbeing



CSI

50
Support for Returning Scholars during COVID 19 Pandemic

PUBLIC DOMAIN

WHAT IS YOUR SOUL-SATISFYING REASON FOR JOINING THE PUBLIC SERVICE?

As we celebrate the 120 years of the Philippine Civil Service, we peeked through the hearts of civil servants by asking them this question on our Facebook Page (fb.com/civilservicegovph): What is your soul-satisfying reason for joining the public service?

Below are some of the many inspiring answers we got. What's yours?

Malou Love My entry in the govt service was, in all honesty, job stability to help the family. But my reason for staying is my commitment - which was cultivated along the years of service — to help the common people, especially those from the marginalized sector, to have confidence and ease of access in the government services.

Despite the controversies that is thrown against the local govt unit and its employees, I can say with utmost sincerity that I am honored to be a public servant. And I desire to be a catalyst for change!

#Kawanibersaryo
#publicserviceonFIRE

Love · Reply · Message · 1d

Norman David Delos Reyes After 20 years in the City of Manila, my classmates keep asking me why I am still here. My answer to them, this is a work that not only gives you a security but more than that it gives you a sense of purpose. I remembered my lola (a CSC Presidential Lindkod Bayan Awsrdee) she told me. "Hindi ka yayaman sa gobyerno. Hindi mo magugustuhan minsan ang sistma sa loob. Pero sa gabi pag natapos mo ang iyong trabaho at may natulungan ka. Yun ang magiging inspirasyon mo para bumangon kinabukasan at muling magmingkod"

#Kawanibersaryo
#publicserviceonFIRE

Love · Reply · Message · 1d · Edited

Franklin Espanto #publicserviceonFIRE When I first joined in the government service, my first purpose is to have stable job, but when I started working, I realized that it is more than that. It is the commitment to serve my countrymen with all my dedication to fulfill my duty as a public servant. To serve not counting on how much my salary, but how I could help my community through development and faithful services.

Love · Reply · Message · 1d

RA Merca A Bilang isang dating Nars na naging Guro na sa isang pampublikong paaralan, mas pinili kong bumalik sa bansa at maging parte ng gobyerno, magsilbi sa mas nakararami lalong lalo na sa paghubog ng mga kabataan, maging inspirasyon, ibahagi ang aking kaalaman, skills, at puso upang sila na magiging tagapagtaguyod ng ating bansa sa hinaharap ay maging maging mga produkto na makatutulong sa nation building, mga kabataang Maka-Diyos, Maka-Tao, Maka-Kalikasan, at Maka-Bansa. Mga kabataang paglabas sa sulok ng paaralan ay may bitbit na kaalaman pagdating sa hamon ng totoong buhay (Life skills, life ready) ay handang humarap at taas noong sabihing isa akong Filipino (handa sa hamon at pagsubok kahit pa sa gitna ng mga adversities ng buhay). Magsilbi ng may puso para sa bata, para sa bayan, hindi para kikitang salapi.

#Kawanibersaryo
#PublicServiceOnFire

Love · Reply · Message · 1d

Ronald Sediego I presently work in the private sector and throughout my career I feel something is missing. I started to feel unhappy as I realized that private companies prioritize profit more than taking care of its people.

I am also an active officer-member of a non-government organization, where I participate in its administration, civic actions, disaster relief & rehabilitation operations, and environmental protection projects, among others, assisting a uniformed government service. Here I feel very happy serving the country, our organization, and the people.

Then it came to me: I realize and I feel that I will be happy if I will be working for the government instead. I have applied for a vacant position in a government institution, and I am really looking forward to be a humble public servant: to serve God, our country, the commission, and most especially the people with dedication, integrity, and professionalism.

A smart salute to all our public servants.

Warm greetings to the Civil Service' 120th anniversary! 🙏

#Kawanibersaryo #PublicServiceOnFIRE

Love · Reply · Message · 1d · Edited

Rz Lyn Siguro ay ang maramdaman ng bawat client namin na "they matter to the government and they are valued."

That our agency is one of the ways na maramdaman nila na may pagbabago. Na kung genuine talaga sa puso ang pagiging public servant, kayang kaya umunlad ng Pilipinas.

#Kawanibersaryo
#publicserviceonFIRE

Love · Reply · Message · 1d · Edited

Mariz Borjal-Bangniwan Been in the government service for 22 years... Grateful and honored to be an instrument of change... YUng alam mong binabago mo ang mukha ng serbisyo sibil na nuong una ay sinasabing walang mga ginagawa... Nagtsitsismisan lang sa oras ng trabaho.. maraming panahon para magpamanicure pedicure at kung ano2 sa oras ng trabaho...he he buti na lang in my 22 years di ko nagawa to!... Pero ngayon di magkandaugaga sa dami ng proyekto ng gobyerno para maramdaman ng nakararami at higit na ngangailangan... Pero masaya pa rin ang feel more fulfilled and satisfied.. Proud to be a government employee... Hindi ka lang naghahanap buhay... bagkus napapalago mo ang iyong sarili and realizing that ito ang goal mo sa buhay! ito yung reason of your existence! Mabuhay lahat tayong kawani ng gobyerno na patuloy na nagmamahal sa kanilang sinumpaang tungkulin.. With commitment, with passion and compassion to be of service to others 🙏🙏🙏🙏

#Kawanibersaryo
#publicserviceonFIRE

Love · Reply · Message · 1d

Bouncing forward

Months of navigating through uncertainty and constant change must have been very challenging for all of us. Nonetheless, if you are still breathing, eating, working, or if you are reading this piece right now, I must say that we somehow manage to get by each day. How? I do not know exactly, but being a spiritual person, I would say it is because of the grace of the Almighty.

Zooming in to the human agency, they say that one of the most important values we must possess to survive this crisis is “resilience” or the ability to recover from or adjust easily and quickly to misfortune or change (Merriam-Webster). It is also defined as the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape after deformation especially by compressive stress (dictionary.com). This is why we often encounter the phrase “bounce back” whenever we join a webinar or read an article about resilience. But will we ever get back to our normal shape? Is it possible for things to get back to the way they used to be? Will we ever be the same again?

With the ongoing pandemic and the forecasts about future trends in work and life in general, I doubt that we will get back to our old ways. This is perhaps the reason why experts in the subject of resilience have revisited the way the word is framed and have looked into how this term can be more relevant in the present time.

Taryn Marie Stejskal, Chief Resilience Officer of Resilience Leadership, highlighted in her talk during the 2020 HR and L&D Innovation Tech Fest that resilience is not just about merely bouncing back, or finding stability amid turbulent times. Rather, resilience is more about bouncing forward—letting yourself be bent, stretched, or compressed by difficult circumstances such as crises, but being able to get back on your feet as a new person, a stronger one.

This is what the Civil Service Reporter 3rd Quarter Issue 2020 is all about—bouncing forward with focus on the 120th Philippine Civil Service Anniversary (PCSA) theme, “Public Sector in the Age of Digital Transformation”. With the COVID-19 pandemic, we have certainly shared a lot of experiences, struggles, and lessons to learn that can help us become wiser and stronger individuals and organizations. The primary issue being the rapid digital transformation or the hastened Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The first few months following the declaration of community quarantine have tested our agility to adapt quickly to the changing demands. But now, it is about how we allow our shared experiences to shape us and our new normal without fixating our eyes and hopes on getting back to normal as in “before-COVID-19”. This CS Reporter issue aims to accompany you in your musings about the new shape of the public sector and civil servants during and post-COVID-19.

Our cover puts the 120th PCSA on spotlight. Read the cover story on pp. 24-28. Dive deep into why CSC has chosen the theme “Public Sector in the Age of Digital Transformation” and see how different government agencies and partners worked together to make this month-long celebration possible despite the ongoing pandemic and social gathering restrictions. The 120th PCSA was divided into four weeks with sub-theme each: *Linggo ng Lingkod Bayani*, *Linggo ng Yamang Tao*, *Linggo ng Malasakit*, and *Linggo ng Pasasalamat*.

The News section (pp. 8-14) highlights the different policies and issuances of the Civil Service Commission that facilitate changes in recruitment and appointment, and show *malasakit* (compassion) to government scholars overseas and to civil servants who have left the service either through retirement or voluntary resignation. An article is also dedicated to the CSC’s participation in the 53rd Anniversary of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

(ASEAN). Highlights on how some ASEAN Member States’ civil service are coping with COVID-19 are featured on the Executive Letter on pages 29-33.

The Regional News gives you a glimpse on how some of our very own CSC Regional Offices II, VII, and XII manage to adapt to digital transformation and continuously perform vital functions such as providing orientation on the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM).

The Citizen’s Guide (pp. 15-17) provides a refresher on online government services. In light of the celebration of *Buwan ng Wika* in August, we also feature *Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino* and share some Filipino translations of words related to HR and digital transformation in the section *Alam Mo Ba?* (Did You Know? p. 18).

You can get more future-oriented insights on our HR Spotlight section (pp. 33-40) which contains articles that discuss emerging HR practices in recruitment, onboarding and performance management; building pandemic-proof leadership competencies; and the journey of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) during the pandemic.

Our Health and Wellness section (pp. 45-49) highlights the importance of empathic communication in the workplace and connecting with colleagues during pandemic.

Moreover, we encourage you to check out our Outlook section (pp. 19-22) and be inspired by the original compositions of featured civil servants and the winning photo entries for the PCSA Online Photography Contest titled “Journey to Our New Normal”.

It is our hope that the 3rd Quarter issue of the CS Reporter magazine for this year gives you valuable insights and inspiration to bounce forward through this age of meaningful transition.

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Rules in filling up frontliner positions eased

the *Interim Guidelines on Appointments and Other Human Resource Actions for the Period of State of Calamity Due to COVID-19 Pandemic*.

The conditional exemption allows agencies to fill up vacant positions resulting from promotion without awaiting action of the CSC on promotional appointments. This applies to positions related to health, social service, and similar positions providing essential services in this time of national health emergency. The agency must also comply with the recruitment, selection, and placement processes of its CSC-approved Agency Merit and Selection Plan and relevant internal guidelines.

HR movement

The interim guidelines also allow reassignment, detail, transfer, and designation to augment human resources involved in addressing the pandemic.

Human Resources for Health (HRH), such as but not limited to medical and allied medical staff, may be reassigned or detailed to other government hospitals or temporary medical facilities requiring supplemental health workforce pursuant to Section 4(m) of R.A. No. 11469 or the *Bayanihan to Heal as One Act* during the state of national emergency, notwithstanding the provisions of R.A. No. 7305 or the *Magna Carta of Public Health Workers*.

Furthermore, licensed professionals, such as but not limited to medical and social workers, who are holding administrative and other positions in the government, may be reassigned, detailed, transferred, or designated to perform additional duties, upon their consent, to healthcare or other government facilities in the exigency of the service. This applies for the duration of the state of national emergency to augment the depleting number of frontliners where their services are necessary, provided that appropriate training is provided prior to deployment.

Meanwhile, qualified officials and employees in the career service may be reassigned to stations or posts near their homes or home provinces if within the region, during the imposition by the National Government of ECQ and MECQ due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coverage and effectivity

CSC Resolution No. 2000659 covers human resource movement for first and second level positions, including second level executive/managerial positions in the career service, and those appointed to the non-career service who are non-presidential appointees. The directive takes effect retroactively on 16 March 2020, the date of the declaration placing the entire country under State of Calamity and shall remain in force until said declaration is lifted.

To ensure uninterrupted delivery of crucial services to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) has ensured faster filling up of vacant positions involved in providing frontline or essential services.

This measure is contained in Resolution No. 2000659, circularized last July via Memorandum Circular No. 14, s. 2020, or

Medical frontliners are some of the most sought-after essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.



CSC sets interim appointment rules

In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) has released interim rules on recruitment, selection, and appointment in government.

These rules are contained in Resolution No. 2000659, circularized via Memorandum Circular No. 14, s. 2020, or the *Interim Guidelines on Appointments and Other Human Resource Actions for the Period of State of Calamity Due to COVID-19 Pandemic*.

On the required publication and posting of vacant positions, the nine-month validity period of publication is extended for the period equivalent to the duration of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) or modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) imposed in the area where the agency is located. Reckoning is based on the date of its lifting. Thus, the duration of the ECQ/MECQ is not included in the counting of the nine-month validity period of publication.

However, if the vacant position is not filled up within the said extension, the agency is required to republish and post the vacancy.

In recruiting and selecting candidates, agencies shall adopt internal guidelines that will allow online recruitment and selection processes such as online competency assessments, video conferencing for interviews, and selection board deliberations.

Appointment

Appointing authorities' electronic signatures on copies of appointment are allowed. Agencies shall adopt internal rules to ensure that these electronic signatures are secured and validated.

Appointees who will assume their duties during the effectivity of the ECQ/MECQ may be allowed to report through the alternative work arrangements adopted by the agency or within thirty (30) days from the lifting of the ECQ/MECQ.



Image from Freepik

The administration of oath of office may be done through virtual modes such as video conferencing, provided that the appointee was furnished a copy of the appointment through email and that he/she acknowledged receipt by affixing an electronic signature, or through email/SMS.

Those who have taken their oath of office and assumed the duties of the position are entitled to receive their salary without awaiting the approval/validation of the appointment by the CSC.

Probationary period

The imposition of the ECQ, MECQ, or General Community Quarantine does not extend the probationary period of appointees serving through the alternative work arrangements adopted by the agency. However, for those whose nature of work depends solely on office operations and could only be performed onsite, the probationary period is extended for the same period of the community quarantine.

Agency submission

Agencies are allowed to transmit appointments to CSC Field Offices via email together with the Appointment Transmittal

and Action Form (ATAF) for regulated agencies or Report on Appointments Issued (RAI) for accredited/deregulated agencies, including the requirements for regular appointments.

Appointments submitted through email may be approved/validated if the appointee meets the qualification standards of the position. This is subject to revalidation upon submission of the original copies of the appointment, plantilla of position, and other supporting documents required under the 2017 ORAOHRA, as well as to verification of civil service eligibility of the candidate. In case of disapproval/invalidation of appointments, the 2017 Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service (RACCS) will be followed.

Coverage and effectivity

CSC Resolution No. 2000659 covers appointments to first and second level positions, including second level executive/managerial positions in the career service, and those appointed to the non-career service who are non-presidential appointees. The directive takes effect retroactively on 16 March 2020, the date of the declaration placing the entire country under State of Calamity and shall remain in force until said declaration is lifted.

Regional cooperation amid COVID-19 pandemic sought

As the nation celebrated the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN Month in August, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) called for stronger regional cooperation as ASEAN Member States continue to cope with the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“While we wish to celebrate the 53rd year of ASEAN with a festive spirit, the need for solidarity in the midst of the COVID-19

pandemic is much stronger. This challenge has brought our hearts and minds closer together as we hope for each ASEAN Member State and all other nations to fully recover from this crisis,” said CSC Chairperson Alicia dela Rosa-Bala.

“This time calls for a deeper commitment in pursuing our vision as one ASEAN to strengthen our ties as a caring and sharing community,” she added.

The pandemic has also put the spotlight on the critical role of the civil service as bureaucracies try to navigate the “new normal” in the workplace, marked by more flexible working arrangements, digitization of public services, and greater emphasis on occupational safety and health.

“The CSC hopes to work with its counterparts in the ASEAN in looking at ways how we can use the lessons we are learning from this pandemic toward better management of our respective civil services and the improvement of public service delivery in the region,” said Chairperson Bala.

ACCSM

The CSC has continuously strengthened ties with its counterpart civil service agencies in the region through the ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM). Its roots can be traced back to 1981 when the ASEAN Conference on Reforms in Civil Service was established. Once every two years, civil service agencies would gather for information exchange, mentoring, and partnering activities

that aim to promote effective cooperation and mutual assistance in public sector capacity building among ASEAN Member States.

The ACCSM led efforts toward the signing of a landmark declaration elevating the civil service as a “catalyst” in achieving the ASEAN’s development goals. On the occasion of the 30th ASEAN Summit in April 2017 in Manila, Philippines, leaders of ASEAN’s 10 Member States signed the ASEAN Declaration on the Role of the Civil Service as a Catalyst for Achieving the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

The declaration recognizes “the significance of the civil service as the backbone of good governance in the region, and its critical mission not only in providing vital public services to the people of ASEAN, but also in driving national and social development.”

The declaration also tasked the ACCSM to take the lead in realizing the goals to “raise the professional standards and capability of civil servants,” “ensure that the civil services of ASEAN embrace good governance principles such as citizen-centricity and innovation”, and “uphold and protect the welfare of civil servants in the region,” among others.

Currently among the initiatives in the ACCSM’s pipeline is the development of ASEAN Guidelines on Public Service Delivery, which would provide ASEAN Member States common guiding principles for improving the quality of public service delivery.

Heads of ASEAN Member States signed the “ASEAN Declaration on the Role of Civil Service as A Catalyst for Achieving AC Vision 2025” on 29 April 2017 as part of the activities of the 30th ASEAN Summit in Manila.



Unhampered transit, paid quarantine leave for returning gov’t scholars

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has released guidelines for foreign and local scholars of the government who are scheduled to return to their local place of residence or assignment this year upon completion of their studies.

CSC Resolution No. 2000778 promulgated on 3 September 2020 states that returning scholars shall be covered by the *Guidelines for Interzonal Movement* or Section 7 of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) Omnibus Guidelines. Said guidelines prescribe that returning non-Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), which include returning scholars,



“who have been issued a DOH or LGU certificate of completion of fourteen (14)-day facility-based quarantine, those who may be required to undergo a mandatory fourteen (14)-day home quarantine, or those who are issued with travel authority upon testing negative for COVID-19 whichever is earlier, shall be granted unhampered transit across zones en route to their final destination in the Philippines.”

Returning scholars are also covered by CSC Memorandum Circular No. 8, s. 2020 (*Revised Interim Guidelines on the Use of Leave Credits for Absences Due to Quarantine and/or Treatment Relative to COVID-19*) which grants them paid quarantine leave.

Under Item 3.4.1 of the said CSC circular: “Absence from work during the fourteen (14) calendar days required quarantine period and treatment for COVID-19, shall be considered as excused absence (required quarantine leave and/or COVID19 treatment leave).”

Expenses to be incurred from post-travel quarantine procedures of returning foreign and local scholars will be shouldered by the agency, as further stated in CSC Resolution No. 2000778.

The said resolution took effect on 27 September 2020 or 15 days after it was published in a newspaper of general circulation.

Claim your terminal leave benefit – CSC

Government employees who have left the service and have not yet claimed their terminal leave benefit are urged to file a request any time with the agency in which they were employed.

In CSC Resolution No. 1901392, circularized via Memorandum Circular No. 15, s. 2020 dated 9 July 2020, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) amended Section 38 of the Omnibus Rules on Leave providing a prescriptive period of 10 years within which to file a request or claim for payment of terminal leave benefit.

This means even those who have been out of the service for more than 10 years may still get said benefit.

Section 38 now reads: “Request for payment of terminal leave benefits may be brought any time after the official/employee severed his/her connection with his/her employer.”

In the said resolution, the Commission said it has ruled on a number of administrative cases brought before it, wherein the payment of terminal leave benefits despite the lapse of the 10-year prescriptive period was allowed.

“The Commission based its decision on the Supreme Court’s ruling stating that government employee’s terminal leave benefit is actually the money value of the employees accumulated leave credits; an accumulation of which is intended for old age or separation from service; and that it is a mere bounty given by the government in consideration or in recognition of meritorious services and springs from the appreciation and graciousness of the government,” the CSC said.

The terminal leave benefit is considered as earned salaries based on one’s accrued leave credits. It is given to any government official or employee who retires, voluntarily resigns, or is separated from the service through no fault of his/her own, and who is not otherwise covered by special law.

CSC RO I screens entries to the COVID-19 themed

Online Photo and Amateur Video-Making Contests

One with the celebration of the 120th Philippine Civil Service Anniversary, various photography enthusiasts and hobbyists from across the Ilocos Region joined in the Online Photography Contest with theme "Journey to the New Normal". Depicting events and activities brought about by the pandemic, a total of 62 entries were received by CSC Regional

Office I. The entries were later shortlisted to 38 after undergoing validation with the contest qualification requirements.

The said shortlisted entries underwent deliberation and scrutiny by five (5) members of the CSC RO I Selection Committee headed by Director IV Hedy Jose B. Lardizabal on 25 August 2020 at CSC RO I, San Fernando City, La Union. Based on the prescribed criteria set by the CSC Central Office TWG, the committee chose the Top 3 which were later submitted for screening at the National Level.

Also, the CSC RO I enjoined all government employees from across the region, regardless of status, to the Amateur Video-Making Contest. The requirement was to produce a four-minute video depicting the beauty and importance of living despite the anxiety and uncertainty brought about by the pandemic along any of the following themes: (a) "Gobyernong may Malasakit sa Gitna ng COVID", (b) "Mga Karanasang Kakaiba sa Panahon ng Pandemiya", and (c) "Gobyerno sa Rehiyon Uno: Leksiyon at Aral sa Bagong Normal".

The five (5) video entries received showcased the selflessness and dedication of government frontliners in Region I from the following offices, namely:

- Local Government Unit of Santol, La Union (*Panatang Makabayan*)
- Provincial Environment and Natural

Resources Office, La Union (*PENRO La Union: Ang Gobyernong May Malasakit sa Gitna ng COVID*)

- North Luzon Polytechnic State College, Candon City, Ilocos Sur (*NLPSC in Region One, We Heal as One!*)
- Local Government Unit of Laoag City, Ilocos Norte (*Laoag City Reinforces its Commitment during Pandemic*)
- Local Government Unit of Alaminos City, Pangasinan (*Bangon Pilipinas*)

The five-member Screening Committee deliberated on the said five video entries on 27 August 2020 based on set criteria.

The Top 30 photo entries have now been posted in the CSC RO I Facebook page for viewing. The Top 3 regional winners shall later be declared after the selection process and the announcement of winners at the national level.

Also, the five videos have been uploaded in the said FB page for viewing as well as for votes from the public. One of the criteria of the amateur video-making contest is having the most number of "likes" and "hearts". The top 3 winning videos shall later be declared at the end of the month after the finalization of scores.

Prizes await all the Top 3 winners of the photo (regional and national) and video-making contests.

The Regional Selection Committee of the 120th PCSA Online Photo Contest, led by Director IV Hedy Jose B. Lardizabal, deliberates on 38 qualified photo entries on 25 August 2020 at CSC RO I, San Fernando City, La Union. The Top 3 entries have been submitted for further screening at the National Level.

The Screening Committee of the CSC RO I Amateur Video-Making Contest, headed by Director IV Hedy Jose B. Lardizabal, undergoes deliberation on the five (5) video entries on 27 August 2020 at CSC RO I, San Fernando City, La Union. The final result of the screening shall be revealed at the end of September 2020.



CSC RO II navigates the 'new normal' with ICT

A crisis should not hinder effective public service delivery.

This belief was exemplified by CSC Regional Office (CSC RO) II as it introduced a number of innovations to serve its stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic. As early as March when the President declared a Luzon-wide community quarantine, CSC RO II buckled down to work to explore how it can continue providing online assistance and services to agencies in the Cagayan Valley and the general public while ensuring its employees' health and safety.

It developed an *Online Client Scheduling* system (<http://cscdos.rf.gd/appointment>) where clients can reserve an appointment slot prior to visiting the regional and field offices. This measure limits the number of visitors coming in at the same time thus comply with physical distancing protocols. It was pilot-tested within CSC RO II, and once final, the system's Nine Quickstep Procedure was widely disseminated via social media.

Information and communications technology or ICT plays a huge role in the work place during the pandemic as organizations quickly adopted technology to manage systems and processes previously were performed manually at the office. To capacitate employees in ICT, CSC RO II held a capacity-building session called *Retooling Employees towards Service Excellence through Technology (RESET)*. Employees who have excellent ICT skills were tapped as speakers; the Information Technology Group demonstrated some of its HR digital innovations to inspire employees to design applications and systems which can be useful in their respective work units. Topics included Online Report Preparation, Monitoring, and Data Extraction; Online Netiquette; and Creating Customer Feedback Forms using Google Forms.

As an offshoot of the RESET, CSC RO II developed the *Client Online Assistance Communication Hub (COACH)*, a system where clients can transact virtually with any of its work units and field offices. Using Facebook's chat and video conferencing functions, COACH has a document scanning and sharing feature where both the attending CSC RO II staff and the client can view and discuss the contents of the document. Through COACH, CSC RO II employees need not travel to different places to get to their clients and stakeholders, avoiding the risk of infection and saving on time and resources.

The *Online Client Feedback Satisfaction Summarizer* was also introduced as a paperless means of retrieving clients' feedback. It uses Google Forms, a free online form generation application which allows the automatic generation of charts based on responses received. The system is not only easy to use but also saves CSC RO II staff time and energy from manually processing data.

The *CSC E-Services Navigator* is a website containing information about CSC and its services. The contents of the Citizen's Charter are arranged per service to make it easier for clients to view the procedures for the transactions they wish to avail. As physical visits to government offices are currently not encouraged, making the Citizen's Charter accessible online using a format that is easy to navigate and understand, would surely benefit clients in adjusting to modified modes of service delivery.

CSC RO II's Cagayan-Batanes Field Office has a few tricks up its sleeves as well. It updated its previous *Reference Hub*, a cloud storage of CSC matters and issuances, into a one-stop website that contains the CSC CagBat Citizen's Charter, Electronic Qualification Standards Manual, Online Feedback System, Productivity Tracker, Customer Feedback Form, IHGRS status, Contact and Cabgat Tracker, reference materials, and job vacancies. It has also a dedicated link connected to the Online Client Scheduling System. The field office also introduced its own Online Feedback System.

CSC RO II continued its PRIME-HRM implementation and used it as a vehicle to help government offices manage change. In support of the program, PRIME-HRM stories were packaged into an e-newsletter called *PRIME-HRM Newsflash*, which can be disseminated electronically, thus dispensing with printing and delivery.

CSC RO II has proven that innovations need not be costly. Sometimes, simple solutions coupled with employees' commitment to the organization's goals are all that is needed to deal with changes in public service delivery brought about by the pandemic.

DOS ONLINE CLIENT SCHEDULING

ATTENTION!
You are currently viewing the calendar schedules for CSC Regional Office II

Select Office :
Please select office

The Online Client Scheduling system shows the available number of slots in a day so that clients can easily set an appointment for a visit to the CSC RO II office and its field offices.

CSC Regional Office II						
September 2020						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 N/A	2 N/A	3 N/A	4 N/A	5 Weekend
6 Weekend	7 N/A	8 N/A	9 N/A	10 N/A	11 N/A	12 Weekend
13 Weekend	14 N/A	15 N/A	16 N/A	17 29 slots left	18 Available	19 Weekend
20 Weekend	21 Available	22 Available	23 Available	24 Available	25 Available	26 Weekend
27 Weekend	28 Available	29 Available	30 Available			

DENR XII undergoes PRIME-HRM Orientation

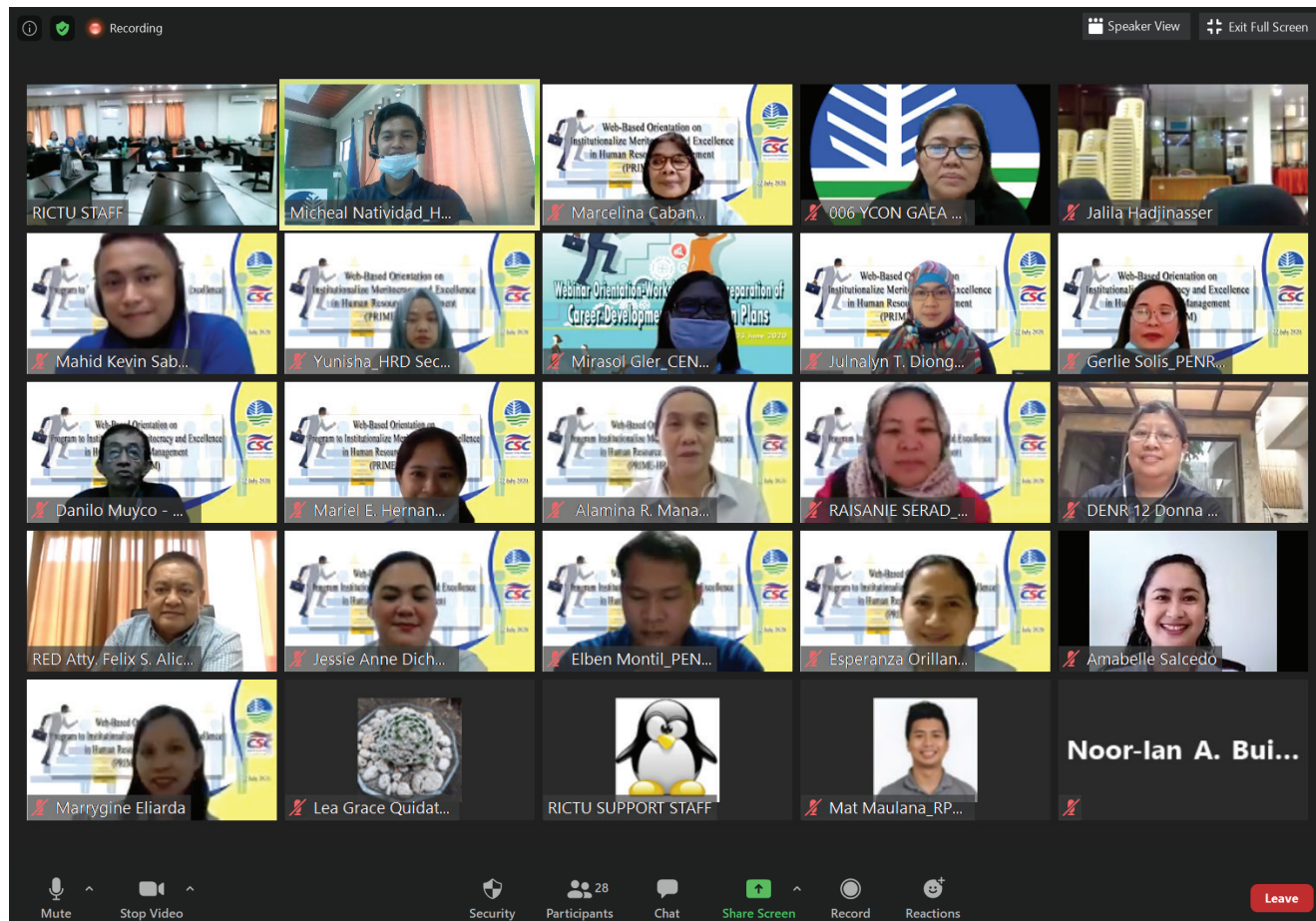
The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Regional Office XII successfully completed the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) Orientation conducted by CSC Regional Office (CSC RO) XII last 22 July 2020 via the Zoom app.

The activity aimed to enable DENR XII to have a better understanding of the program, as well as to help the said agency comply with PRIME-HRM requirements and eventually be recognized as model HR practitioners. Assistant Regional Director for Management Services, Donna Mayor-Gordove, CESO IV, together with 37 employees consisting of Division Chiefs, Administrative Officers, Foresters, Records Officers, Data Management Officer, Training Specialists, and a few first level employees, completed the orientation program conducted by Ms. Mariam Amabelle C. Salcedo, Acting Chief Human Resource Specialist of the Policies

and Systems Evaluation Division of CSC RO XII. After a brief overview of the PRIME-HRM, Salcedo gave participants the opportunity to discuss among themselves the challenges and improvements in DENR XII in the areas of Recruitment, Selection and Placement, Performance Management, Learning and Development, and Rewards and Recognition. The breakaway group discussions made the participants realize their strengths and areas for improvement in HR management.

While the five-hour session was limited, the forum gave participants basic information about the program, the PRIME-HRM Maturity Level II indicators, and a few tips on crafting evidence requirements. Salcedo also emphasized the adoption and implementation of customized Equal Opportunity Principle (EOP) policies and guidelines across all HR systems, and enhancement of the agency's planning processes, databases, and tracking efficiency practices.

Thirty-eight (38) officials and employees of DENR XII attend the five-hour PRIME-HRM Orientation conducted by CSC RO XII via video conferencing app, Zoom.



Citizen's

Guide

A refresher on online government services you can access while on quarantine

In this section, we give readers information and updates on public service delivery aligned with the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery. Readers can also get tips and advice on availing various government services in accordance with each government agency's Citizen's Charter.

The theme for this year's Philippine Civil Service Anniversary is, "Philippine Civil Service @120: Public Sector in the Age of Digital Transformation. The celebration led by the Civil Service Commission (CSC), underscores the use of information and communication technology in the pursuit of efficient public service delivery in the Philippine government, especially in the context of emergency situations.

In the age of technology, public service has to remain competitive and responsive enough to meet the evolving needs of its clientele. But pre-COVID-19, there are a number of government services that clients can access online. Here is a refresher of some of the most essential:



Photo by Thomas Lefebvre on Unsplash

A refresher on online government services you can access while on quarantine

PhilHealth e-Registration

You can register to the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation or Philhealth, the government-mandated national healthcare insurance system, online.

Through eregister.philhealth.gov.ph or PhilHealth's Electronic Registration System, one can check health benefits and find government-accredited healthcare institutions from the database. The eRegister also allows clients to complete registration for a PhilHealth number without having to visit a PhilHealth branch.

HDMF Online Registration System

Similar to PhilHealth, one can avail the Home Development Mutual Fund or Pag-IBIG's membership completely online. After applying for and receiving a Pag-IBIG number, there are numerous services that can be accessed such as apply for housing loans, pay for loans, submit remittance schedule, and verify house loan payments—all online.

The application for Pag-IBIG membership is done in five easy steps: To register for a Pag-IBIG membership, visit their website at www.pagibigfund.gov.ph. Scroll down a little and click the "e-services" button. On the next page, click "Membership Registration" to apply for a Pag-IBIG membership. Then, fill-out required full name and date of birth to get access to the application form. Once you finish the form, click the Summary tab and submit the registration. If the sign up has been successful, client will be redirected to the Successful Registration page and receive an SMS confirming the registration.

Business name registration at your fingertips

Businesses classified as sole proprietorship can take the first step in registering their businesses by securing the Business/Trade Name Registration issued by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). This can be done quickly and conveniently thru the DTI's Business Name Registration System or BNRS.

HOW TO USE THE MANGGAGAWA ONLINE PROCESSING SYSTEM

1. For New User, register in the system using your personal email account and click the Sign Me Up button. Open your email account to click the confirmation link.
2. Log-in as Already Registered user. Enter your last issued OEC number. If no record found, set an Online Appointment.
3. If record is found, update your Personal Data, Contract Particulars, and Beneficiaries, as needed.
4. Click Acquire OEC or Exemption for online assessment. Enter flight date and confirm if returning to the same employer and jobsite.
5. If returning to the same employer and jobsite, the system will display a confirmation message indicating that you are exempted from securing the OEC and payment of processing fee.
6. If not, you will be redirected to the Appointment Page. Select your preferred POEA office and schedule for processing of OEC and payment.

The business registration is the main requirement when registering businesses with BIR, acquiring Mayor's Permit, among other requirements.

Many people think that there is a need to hire a liaison to do this, but if one has the time and are comfortable with it, it is simple as accessing the BNRS website at <https://bnrs.dti.gov.ph/> and click "Register Now".

Balik-Manggagawa Online Processing System

The Overseas Employment Certification (OEC) is the most important document for overseas Filipino workers (OFW) to acquire. The OEC process is designed to offer protection to OFWs, ensuring that they are documented properly and leave the Philippines healthy and informed. It serves as an ID, certificate, and permit all in one, and one can start the process of getting one online.

The Balik-Manggawa Online Processing System was created to serve departing and returning OFWs.

PSASerbilis.com.

If you're one of the many needing a copy of your birth certificate, request one to be delivered to you by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Requests for civil registry services—the issuance of certified copies of birth, marriage, and death certificates, and CENOMAR (certificate of no marriage)—can be submitted through PSASerbilis.com.

On the PSA Serbilis homepage, users can click on the "Click here to request now" button which will lead to the Terms and Conditions page. Click on "I accept," and be taken to subsequent steps.

For the payment, after the Acknowledgement, a Batch Request Number and a Request Reference Number

will be given for each request made. These are the numbers required for payment which can be made thru banks and accredited payment centers. Once paid, PSA will then deliver the documents via courier. The delivery schedule is from 8 AM to 5 PM, Mondays to Fridays, except during holidays. The delivery period depends on your specified delivery address, for instance for Metro Manila, it will take about three to five working days after payment and for other countries, approximately six to eight weeks after payment.

ExpreSSS

All non-government employees enrolled in the Social Security System (SSS) can sign up at the SSS Member Portal, which allows SSS members to track their contributions and check their membership information. Non-SSS members can also apply for an SSS online.

In keeping with the digital times, SSS continually shifts to online transactions and checkless disbursements that selected online services of SSS have been made mandatory for members and employers, including pensioners and claimants. Through the My.SSS account, members have 24/7 access to SSS for filing of benefit claims, loan applications, and other transactions.

NBI online clearance

Surprisingly, an NBI Clearance is one of the easier government documents to attain and the main reason is the online application system, which has improved the service immensely.

Users can register for NBI Clearance online and schedule a visit to the nearest NBI branch via the website. The only requirement for users of the system is the preparation of a personal email address where the confirmation of one's registration in NBI Clearance Online will be sent as well as the One Time Password (OTP).

To register, go to the NBI Clearance site <https://clearance.nbi.gov.ph/> and fill out all the necessary details. If client intends to renew the clearance, it is easier, just register online, pay at the nearest convenience store and wait for it to be delivered door-to-door. Just pray you don't have a hit.

eGSIS Mo Portal

Government employees are covered by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), which has moved many of its services online. The eGSIS Mo allows GSIS members to view GSIS records in the convenience of their home or office without the need to go to a GSIS office. It also features viewing of tentative computation of retirement and social insurance benefits, dividend payments, claim and loan records and pensioners' data.

To register, members should initially sign up for their eGSIS Mo account by accessing <http://egsismo.gsis.gov.ph/> and keying in their GSIS business partner (BP) number. BP numbers may be obtained from their office's agency authorized officer or electronic remittance file handler; any GSIS office; or GSIS Contact Center (847-4747). The system is accessible to members who are based in the Philippines.

As such, the CSC encourages government agencies to aggressively explore and adopt technologies that could lead to more effective and efficient delivery of public services. There is a need to shift toward "made-for-me services" in compliance with Republic Act No. 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018. Under this law, government agencies are required to simplify, streamline, re-engineer, automate and revolutionize service delivery both in business and non-business transactions.

ALAM MO BA? (Did You Know?)

Pagpupugay sa Wikang Filipino sa Panahon ng Pagbabagong Dihital

Nakasentro ang pagdiriwang ng Buwan ng Wika para sa taong 2020 sa temang, “Wika ng Kasaysayan, Kasaysayan ng Wika: Ang mga Katutubong Wika sa Maka-Filipinong Bayanihan Kontra Pandemya” -- sa halaga ng Filipino at mga katutubong wika sa bansa bilang mabisang sandata sa pakikidigma laban sa pandemya.

Layunin nitong himukin ang bayanihan ng sambayanan upang masugpo ang patuloy na paglaganap ng COVID-19 sa pamamagitan ng pagbabahagi ng mga impormasyon o pabatid-publiko na nasa Filipino at mga katutubong wika.

Pagbabantayog din ito sa kahalagahan ng mandato ng Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) na itaguyod ang pagpapalaganap ng Filipino at mga katutubong wika sa bansa bilang pinakamabisang midyum sa pagkakaroon ng kolektibong pag-uunawaan ng sambayanan.

Bilang pakikibahagi ng Komisyon sa Serbisyo Sibil sa pagdiriwang, ating alamin ang salin sa Filipino ng mga salitang Ingles na ginagamit sa serbisyo sibil.

At para sa karagdagang bonus, narito ang mga karaniwang salitang gamit sa araw-araw kaugnay ng dihital na pagbabago, ang tema ng ika-120 taong anibersaryo ng Serbisyo Sibil ng Pilipinas:



“YAMANG TAO”
HUMAN RESOURCES



“KADALUBHASAAN”
EXPERTISE



“LAKAS PAGGAWA”
WORKFORCE



“PAGHIRANG O PAGTAKDA”
APPOINTMENT



“TUNGKULING MALA-PANGHUKUMAN”
QUASI-JUDICIAL FUNCTIONS



“HUWARAN NG KAHUSAYAN”
MODEL OF EXCELLENCE



“KASIYAHAN NG KLIYENTE”
CLIENT SATISFACTION



“MEKANISMONG PANANAGUYOD”
SUPPORT MECHANISMS



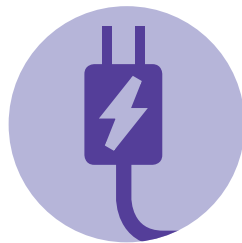
“KAWINGAN”
HYPERLINK



“POOK SAPOT”
WEBSITE



“PANGINAIN”
BROWSER



“PANTABLAY”
CHARGER



“PANG-ULONG HATINIG”
HEADSET



“SULATRONIKO”
EMAIL

JOURNEY TO THE NEW NORMAL

CSC employees and officials showcase their very own art pieces varying from photos, poetry, songs, cartoon, etc. which reflect their outlook on the theme/s featured in the current CS Reporter issue. Take a short break from texts and enjoy these wonderful art contributions.

OUTLOOK

One of the activities for the 120th Philippine Civil Service Anniversary is the Online Photography Contest. Organized by the Civil Service Commission's Human Resource Relations Office in coordination with the CSC Regional Offices and the CSC Photography Club, the contest encouraged entries from government workers who are also photography enthusiasts or hobbyists.

Themed “Journey to the New Normal”, the contest sought photo entries reflecting norms and behavior that mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 situation.

The images should be able to convey the beauty and importance of living despite the uncertainty and discomfort brought about by pandemic. It must also strongly attract the imagination of the viewer to ensure positive outlook in their hearts and minds.

The photos were also assessed based on content and adherence to the theme, visual impact, creativity and originality, and photographic quality.

For this issue's Outlook, the CS Reporter takes a closer look at the winning entries:

Keep Distance

by Mara Katrina T. Panoj

Garnering the highest rating, this photo captures the melancholy reality of the pandemic. As naturally social beings, people are suddenly dealing with barriers and distance while still trying to work together. Mara Katrina, an employee of the Davao City Water District, expresses a longing for the old normal and the unease of distancing, captioning her photo with “No matter how much we wanted to be together, we just can’t. Because today, it is always safer to be far away from each other.”

Despite expressing a kind of loneliness, this photo also captures a simple technique to comply with minimum health standards while still allowing people to go out and transact.

This photo was taken on 18 August 2020 using a Nikon D7200 camera



Improvise, Adapt, and Overcome

by Chelcie A. Baratas

“You may not be able to control every situation and its outcome, but you can control your attitude and how you deal with it—resetting expectations and identifying what you can do rather than focusing on what you can’t.”

This was Chelcie’s thoughts on this particular moment she has captured with her camera. For safety reasons, a blow dryer was used to blow candles on a birthday cake. Much love is expressed on birthday greetings and gifts, but perhaps more love is shown here because both cared much for each other and chose to take precaution.

Chelcie is an employees of the Social Security System (Lapu-Lapu, Cebu Branch).



Kalaro

by Vidal Jun S. Riva

Vidal took this charming photo of two children using the classic Pinoy makeshift “telephone”—two cans connected by a string. Taken on 29 July 2020 with a Sony a6400, the photo is a nod to the current situation of social distancing even during play time, as well as a throwback to simpler times.

An employee of the Ipag National High School Bataan, Vidal muses: “Sa mga mata ng bata, hindi nakikita ang kalaban at panganib ng pandemya. Karapatan pa rin nila and makipaglaro at sumaya ng may tamang pag-gabay at pagsunod sa nakatatanda.”



“AWIT NG LINGKOD BAYANI”

Lyrics and Music by Emilio Roe Gapit

I

Ang kailangang serbisyo sa bayan
ay malinis at makatarungan
at dapat lamang mula sa iyong puso
para sa sambayanan

II

Ang kailangang serbsiyo sa bayan
na galing sa mabuting tauhan
na naglilingkod ng tapat
nang makamtam ay ang “kaunlaran”

Koro

Magmumula sa iyo
ang tunay na serbisyo
mabilis at maayos
para sa mamamayan

Ito ay kaya mo
kung iyong maisapuso
ang tunay na serbisyo
para sa taumbayan

III

Ang kailangang serbisyo sa bayan
dapat lamang ay may kagalingan
at ihandog mo ng may ngiti
upang publiko ay masiyahan

IV

Ang kailangang serbisyo sa bayan
mula sa ating niluklok diyan
ay serbisyong walang kinilingan
patas sa sangkatauhan

Koda

Magmumula sa iyo
ang tunay na serbisyo
mabilis at maayos
para sa sambayanan

Ito ay kaya mo
kung iyong maisapuso
ang tunay na serbisyo
ng isang lingkod bayan



Listen to the song

“I AM A PUBLIC SERVANT”

Poems by Lady Lyne Margrethe U. Adoptante
Teacher II, Balayan Senior High School
Balayan, Batangas

#1

I wake up each morning
And head on to conquer the day.
With a smile on my face,
Nothing could get in my way.

I see people lining up,
Waiting for me.
I smile and greet them
As jovial as I can be.

I Help them through
So, they will leave with a smile.
I make their transactions fast
Their time worth the while.

I look up and see past twelve,
But the line is still full.
I will help as much as I could
That is the golden rule.

I munch on a little something,
While calling out the next one.
Most of them look hungry too,
And yet I am not done.

I feel much better after an hour,
The cookie is a great help.
The long line is now empty,
Onto the canteen I skelp.

It is past two.
I finished what I came to do
Would never forget the happy faces
And the sound of merry voices.

I go back to my post,
And the line is long again.
I smile and greet with the same old refrain.
I am a public servant and this I remain.

#2

I am awake before the sun is even up.
I dash outside and hail for my ride.
I arrive at school a quarter to six
What I am feeling, I must hide.
I greet each one with my beaming smile
Tap one on the shoulder, wink at the other.
I am again on the old “I am your Teacher” style.
“Glad you’re in school, I’ll make it worth your while.”
After the morning classes,

When minds get full and eyes are tired,
I go to my room with the lunch I desire,
But I see one without food and offer mine with a smile.
As students are going home, I look at my Visitation Form.
I remember Ryan and wondered why he has not come.

I know it has been two weeks now,
I am most worried; I must find his home.
A quarter to six and it is getting dark
But Ryan is not in school, he has not got a mark.
So on to his home, the first time I go
Will I find him there? I hope so.

Blessed I still am, he is home.
I talk to his mother and now I know,
That Ryan will not be going to school.
He must work; his father is a fool.

As I walk to the street, and wait for my ride
I cannot stop tears from taking their stride
If only I could hold on to my students, so they will chase their
dreams

I would be the greatest teacher, and so it seems.
I arrive at my home, cozy and warm,
My family waiting and asking why.
They notice I had just cried
“I am a public servant”; this is my reply.

#3

I wake up from my almost three hours sleep.
The sun is not up yet, but I must take a peep,
And see if there are enemies out there
I know, danger is everywhere.

They say I am dancing with death,
That I should not take this threat;
But if I fear and others will too
Who else will fight the foe?

Each day I pray there will be no war,
All it does is leave an ugly scar.
So here I am, alert and watchful
To our only God I will be faithful.

The circle of life, I dare not question
This country is under my protection.
A soldier, a hero, whatever I may be called
Whether my story will be left untold.

I may lose a limb, my hearing or sight
I will always fight with all my might
But If God wills me to be alive,
I will work for peace to survive.

At the end of my journey, I will never regret
Serving our country, lest I forget.
“I am a public servant”, is my constant reply
To all those who never fail to ask me why.

COVER STORY

120th PHILIPPINE CIVIL SERVICE ANNIVERSARY

TECHNOLOGY, MALASAKIT, TAKE CENTER STAGE ON THIS YEAR’S ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

September has been a busy and fun month!

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) once again spearheaded the 120th Philippine Civil Service Anniversary (PCSA) in observance of the establishment of the civil service in the Philippine islands by virtue of Public Act No. 5 on 19 September 1900. There is a lot to celebrate for the 120 years of developments and reforms in human resource (HR) management in the Philippine government. As the CSC aims to become a global center of HR excellence, it has also led government agencies in transitioning from transactional toward strategic HR.

On this special anniversary issue, the *CS Reporter* looks back on the highlights of the anniversary month:

Theme

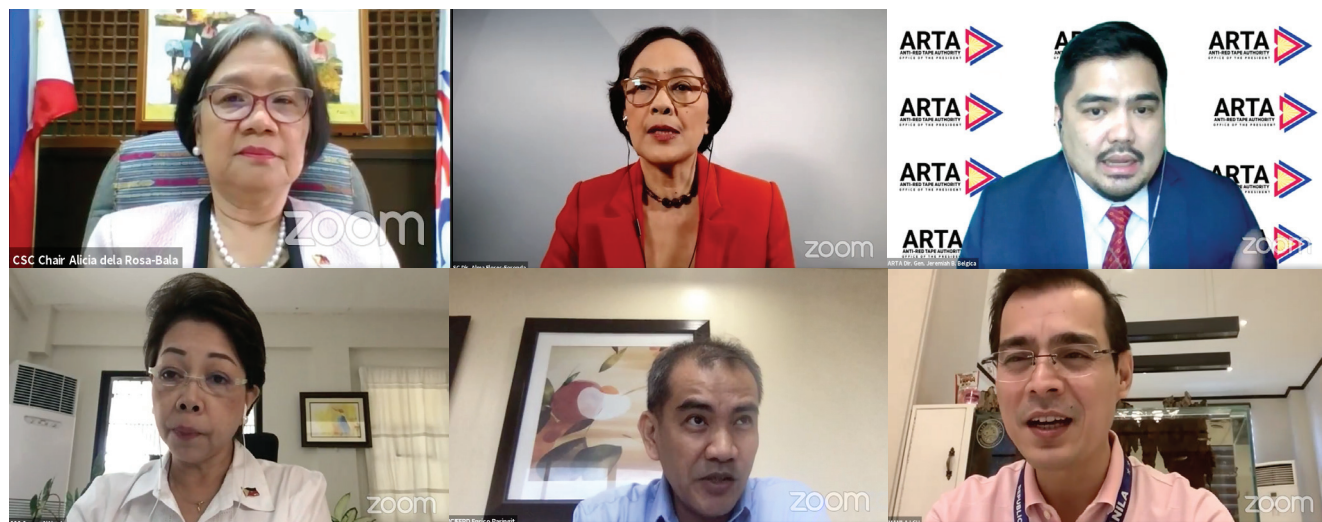
It’s not easy to hold an anniversary celebration in the thick of a pandemic. Thankfully, the CSC, along with the rest of the Philippine civil service, has been anticipating the age of technology.

The theme for the 120th PCSA is *Philippine Civil Service @120: Public Sector in the Age of Digital Transformation*. In recent years, we have advocated the modernization of facilities and automation of processes to respond to the clamor for faster and easier transactions.

We also have to comply with higher standards of public service now that the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018 (Republic Act No. 11032) is now in place.

The current crisis has only hastened this process dramatically. Even the whole anniversary celebration became fully online. So even if the R.A.C.E. to Serve Fun Run and the Government Choral Competition were missed this year, government workers still enjoyed a full line up of events and activities in the comfort of their own homes and offices.

To organize the month-long celebration, the CSC laid down weekly sub-themes to focus on important aspects of public service. Week 1 is the *Linggo ng Lingkod Bayani*, featuring launching activities that shine the spotlight on government workers and their valuable contribution in upholding a clean, efficient, and citizen-centered government. Week 2 is *Linggo ng Yamang Tao*, highlighting HR trends and developments through learning and development sessions and discovering innovation. Week 3 is *Linggo ng Malasakit*, providing support to clients, stakeholders, and those who are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Week 4 is *Linggo ng Pasasalamat*, a special week meant for expressing gratitude to a job well done among colleagues and partners.



CSC Chairperson Alicia dela Rosa-Bala and Commissioner Aileen Lourdes A. Lizada welcomed the guests and members of the media to the conference (top left, bottom left photo). CSC Office for Legal Affairs Director IV Alma Flores-Foronda served as the moderator during the press conference (top middle photo). Executive Director Enrico C. Paringit shares the DOST-PCIEERD's programs to assist the Philippine government in its goal to modernize systems and services, and maximize the use of technology (bottom middle photo). Director General Jeremiah B. Belgica shared the ARTA's implementation efforts for the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018 (top right photo). Manila City Mayor Isko Moreno discussed innovations in local governance as part of boosting the city's income and ensuring efficient delivery of services to its constituents (bottom right photo).

CSC holds virtual press conference on digital transformation

The first week of September is often full of launching activities for the anniversary. This year, the CSC through the Public Assistance and Information Office held a virtual press conference on 1 September to introduce the anniversary theme and activities to the members of the media and the public.

Chairperson Alicia dela-Rosa Bala and Commissioner Aileen A. Lizada led the event. They were accompanied by representatives from the CSC, including Executive Director Arthur Luis P. Florentin (Civil Service Institute), Director IV Rodolfo B. Encajonado (Human Resource Policies and Standards Office), Director IV Maria Luisa Salonga-Agamata (Public Assistance and Information Office), Director IV Editha M. dela Peña (Examinations, Recruitment, and Placement Office), Director IV Cecilia C. dela Fuente (Human Resource Relations Office), Director III Noreen Boots Gocon-Gragas (Integrated Records Management Office), and Directors III Ariel V. Villanueva and Christian Dawn G. Molina (Office for Legal Affairs).

The CSC also created a panel of speakers to discuss and explore innovation and technology in public service. Anti-Red Tape Authority Director General Jeremiah B. Belgica, Manila City Mayor Francisco A.

Domagoso, Department of Information and Communications Technology Undersecretary Alan A. Silor, and Department of Science and Technology's Philippine Council for Industry, Energy, and Emerging Technology Research and Development Executive Director Enrico C. Paringit shared with the audience their program and projects meant to modernize public service in the country.

An open forum was held after the presentations of the speakers to entertain questions from the media. CSC Office for Legal Affairs Director IV Alma Flores-Foronda served as the moderator.

Winners of the Search for Outstanding Government Workers Announced

Each year, the CSC seeks nominations to the Search for Outstanding Government Workers under the Honor Awards Program. This reward and recognition program has three categories: the Presidential Lingkod Bayan award for outstanding contributions of groups and individuals with national impact; the CSC Pagasa award for outstanding contributions of groups and individuals that benefited their unit, agency, or community; and the Dangal ng Bayan award for exemplary behavior displayed reflecting the public service norms under the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards of Public Officials and Employees (Republic Act No. 6713).

No less than the President of the Republic of the Philippines confers the awards to the best of the best in the bureaucracy.

This year, the Honor Awards Secretariat received a total of 166 nominations from all over the country. The most number of nominees came from Region II with 25 nominations, followed by Region VI with 20 nominations, and Regions I, III, and the Cordillera Administrative Region with 12 nominations each.

As awards rites cannot be held this year, the winners will be honored during next year's awards rites at Malacañang.

Government workers join the online PCSA campaign

The CSC also maximized social media as a means to communicate with all government workers, the media, and the public. Instead of using traditional printed promotional materials, the CSC encouraged government agencies to use its digital template designs to be able to participate in the campaign.

Government agencies easily customized the anniversary materials and posted them on their websites and social media accounts.

The CSC also created official hashtags for the event: #kawanibersaryo corrects the assumption that the PCSA is the anniversary of the CSC and emphasizes that it is the

anniversary of the whole bureaucracy, while #publicserviceonFIRE refers to the age of digital transformation ushered in by the Fourth Industrial Revolution or FIRE, and the response or action that the civil service has to take.

CSC's Virtual Forum Features Continuity, Recovery

The Civil Service Institute hosted the virtual Public Sector Leaders and HR Forum on 10 September to bring together leaders and HR managers and discuss HR issues and trends brought about by the pandemic crisis. Themed "Public Sector Continuity and Recovery", the virtual forum also provided global and local perspectives on how the public sector may navigate through these complex times. Civil Service College Singapore Dean and CEO Ms. Ong Toon Hui served as the keynote speaker.

The forum was divided into four sessions. Office of Civil Defense Capability Building and Training Service Director III Susana G. Juangco and CSC Human Resource Policies and Standards Office Director IV Rodolfo B. Encajonado discussed Government and CSC Initiatives, while

MW LEADS Management Consulting's Mr. Audie Masigan and 2018 Dangal ng Bayan awardee Eva Cutiongco-dela Paz of the University of the Philippines Manila's National Institutes of Health discussed Public Service Values.

Meanwhile, the session on Transitioning to the New Normal was led by Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' Corporate Services Sector Managing Director Silvina Q. Mamaril-Roxas and Human Resource Development Department Director Peter Paul A. Soliva; and Pasig City Government's Local Chief Executive Victor Ma. Regis Sotto and HR Department Heads Elvira R. Flores. Lastly, National Center for Mental Health's Dr. Rodney Boncajes, Emovation's Ms. Rubie Manalac, and Fellowship of Christians in Government's Mr. Niels Patrick Riconalla discussed Managing Total Wellness, including discussions on physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual wellness.

CSC Chairperson Alicia dela Rosa-Bala and Commissioner Aileen Lourdes A. Lizada also graced the event to welcome and greet guests and participants.

attended via Zoom, while the livestreamed video was viewed by around 79,000 netizens according to the CSC's official Facebook Page statistics.

PRIME-HRM Awards Recognizes Trailblazers in Strategic HR

CSC saluted those who have excelled in human resource management and organization development through the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) Awards.

The PRIME-HRM Awards is an important part of the anniversary celebration because it celebrates the journey of government agencies toward strategic HR. It is considered an achievement to be able to hit all the HR standards that the PRIME-HRM Bronze level requires.

PRIME-HRM is designed to improve the core HR systems of government agencies to help them boost their performance in the pursuit of public service excellence.

Being compliant to the PRIME-HRM Maturity Level 2 indicators means an agency has upgraded its four core HRM systems: Recruitment, Selection, and Placement; Learning and Development; Rewards and Recognition; and Performance Management.

PRIME-HRM is characterized by its three major processes: assess, assist, award. An agency will be diagnosed based on the status of its HR processes against the PRIME-HRM Maturity Level indicators. CSC will also lend technical assistance to help agencies reach their HR maturity goals. When an agency is able to meet the next higher maturity level, they are recognized for their achievement

As of the 1st semester of 2020, 168 government agencies have been assessed and assisted by the CSC. Out of these agencies, 13 qualified to be given the Bronze Award for meeting the PRIME-HRM Maturity Level 2 indicators.

CSC Regional Offices have scheduled their virtual recognition ceremonies for their PRIME-HRM awardees this anniversary month.

Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto shares his experience in leading his people through HR reforms and the new normal (top right photo). CSC officials, panelists, moderators, and the technical group pose for a virtual photo at the forum.



CSC offers online job fair to applicants

The CSC held the Government Online Career Fair (GOCF) on 14-18 September 2020. Jointly organized with JobStreet.com, the GOCF sought to promote easy access to employment opportunities in the public sector by bringing jobseekers and hiring government agencies together in a virtual job fair. This is also held to help Filipinos rendered jobless by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CSC and JobStreet.com were able to gather 7,831 vacancies from 705 national government agencies (including central and regional offices), local government units, government-owned and controlled corporations, and state universities and colleges.

Job seekers were also encouraged to browse through CSC's website, www.csc.gov.ph/career/, for vacancies. This is a repository of vacancies submitted by government agencies, with details such as requirements, qualifications, and deadline for submitting applications. To date, there are 7,555 positions posted in the CSC website that are still open for applications.

A total of 270,926 job seekers registered to and participated in the event. The vacant positions were viewed 536,597 times. The top three (3) most viewed positions include Administrative Assistant, Data Encoder, and Administrative Assistant II.

Meanwhile, the profile of agencies that joined were viewed for a total of 261,910 times. The top three (3) most visit agency profiles were that of the Home Development Mutual Fund, Department of Education, and Land Bank of the Philippines.

After job seekers hit the apply button, the agencies that received their applications conducted the initial assessment. After the job fair, applicants shall be notified through email or text message the status of the application, or additional instructions or requirements to be complied by the applicant.

The CSC encouraged applications from qualified interested persons, including persons with disabilities (PWD), members of indigenous communities, and those from any sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE).

The provisions of the First Time Job Seekers Act were also applied to first time applicants. First time jobseekers as defined under CSC



Resolution No. 2000363 dated 21 February 2020 are entitled to a waiver of fees and charges in the issuance or authentication of a copy of Certificate of Eligibility (COE). Should the record of the Commission show that the person has previously requested a COE but has not been employed yet and still qualifies for the benefits provided by the First Time Job Seekers Act, they can still be given the requested certificate for free, provided, they complied with identified requirements.

Wellness Program Held for Government Workers

The CSC also held an online wellness program from 14-18 September as part of its *malasakit* for government workers. Entitled "The Gift: Wellness and the Path Forward", the workshop aims to promote and teach total wellness of government employees. Led by HR and OD consultant Angelito Lupena, the workshop covered the four dimensions of wellness: mental, emotional social, and spiritual to help employees cope up during these trying times.

The five sessions held daily this week encouraged the participants to take a closer look at the positive side of their lives through reflection and sharing. The sessions also helped participants discover their unique gift as a person, assess current life situations that are affecting them, identify things that hinder them to move forward, and choose a positive path toward recovery.

CSC announces national winners of online photo contest

Three (3) government workers and photography enthusiasts emerged as the national winners of the PCSA Online Photography Contest. This was announced by the CSC on 15 September through a virtual awarding ceremony.

The winners were Ms. Mara Katrina T. Panoy of Davao City Water District (1st place for "Keep Distance"), Ms. Chelcie A. Baratas of Social Security System Lapu-Lapu, Cebu Branch (2nd place for "Improvise, Adapt, Overcome), and Mr. Vidal Jun S. Riva of the Ipag National High School Bataan (3rd place for "Kalaro"). The winners received a cash prize of PHP15,000, PHP12,000, and PHP10,000, respectively.

The national winners were selected from 704 entries from all over the country, 48 of which became regional winners.

The photos were assessed based on content and adherence to the theme, visual impact, creativity and originality, and photographic quality. The panel of judges included Mr. Mervin C. Vergara, who is the Art Director of Agung, the official newsletter of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts; Ms. Charisse Tinio, the owner and president of Nice Print Photo, Inc.; and Atty. Raymond Fortun, a well-known litigation lawyer who is also a wedding photographer, and the taker of the Wedding Supplier of the Year Award in 2009.

The winning photos will grace the pages of CSC's official publications, and featured on its social media channels.

Themed "Journey to the New Normal", the contest encouraged photo entries that communicated new norms or behavior which may effectively inspire others on how to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 situation. The images must convey the beauty and importance of living despite the uncertainty and discomfort brought about by pandemic. It must also strongly attract the imagination of the viewer to ensure positive outlook in their hearts and minds.

The contest ran from 1 July to 21 August.

FLEXISPOT®

THE SM STORE



ACE Hardware



CSC solicits stories of volunteerism, heroism

An important part of the anniversary celebration is expressing gratitude to the people who have put the public's welfare first before themselves. The CSC launched the Kwentong *Lingkod Bayani* or Commendation for Service in Times of Calamities to search for stories of government workers and their extraordinary service during times of crisis or calamities. The service performed must have been above and beyond the employee's task or job function, an act that has helped fill in gaps in government response or service during emergencies, or undertaken under extreme circumstances, which resulted in the delivery of the mandated function of the agency despite great adversity during calamities.

Government agencies, government workers, beneficiary groups, and/or the general public were encouraged to send stories to the CSC until 30 September.

The stories are currently being reviewed and the selected ones will be featured on the CS Reporter, the CSC's monthly documentary, *Lingkod Bayani Diaries*, and its social media channels.

Agency Family Day held virtually

Another special activity for the *Linggo ng Pasasalamat* is the holding of the Agency Family Day. This is to emphasize that colleagues in government are also a family, and that relationships are meant to be nurtured in order to build a strong and united workforce.

The CSC encouraged agencies to conduct the Agency Family Day virtually this year to comply with minimum health and safety standards. This includes holding virtual *kumustahan* sessions or even a virtual *salu-salo* to enjoy the day without compromising health.

Special Treats for Government Workers

Once again, the CSC partnered with private sector companies to offer special treats to government workers. This is one way of thanking government workers for a job well done, and giving them something to look forward to even in the midst of challenges and crisis.

Ace Hardware held their "Salute to the New Heroes" promo from 25 August to 20 September, where they offered government workers 20-50% discount on selected items, plus an extra 10% off on all items for a minimum purchase of PHP2,000.00. This was available on all Ace Hardware stand-alone branches nationwide.

A 10% discount was also offered by Flexispot. ph on their ergonomic office furniture and accessories, Ideal Vision on their frames and sunglasses, and Anthony Audio for their Filipino made speakers and audio equipment for the whole month of September. The discount was availed upon check out from their online stores. Meanwhile, Ka Tunying's offered government workers a free coffee or iced tea upon purchase of any of their rice meals from their stand-alone stores.

Lastly, The SM Store held the Civil Service Day sale from 18-20 September, offering a 10% discount on regular-priced items in all SM branches nationwide, with a minimum receipt of PHP2,000. This may be availed through their #143SM hotline, the new safe and convenient way of shopping at The SM Store. The hotline allowed buyers to contact a personal shopper, choose among delivery or pick up options nationwide, and select from a number of payment options.

Government workers were required to present their government agency ID or UMID card, and in the case of SM, the SM Advantage Card, to avail of the discounts.

CSC's partners complied with the Department of Trade and Industry's guidelines on promos for stand-alone stores and online stores.

REGIONAL PCSA ACTIVITIES



CSC Regional Offices (ROs) implemented the nationwide events and contests in the regions, such as kick-off activities, virtual PRIME-HRM Awards, regional HAP recognition rites, agency Family Day and Loyalty Day, screening of regional entries for the Online Photography Contest and *Kwentong Lingkod Bayani*, and holding of local press conferences, among others. Aside from this, CSC Regional Offices also hosted unique activities in their areas to engage their local community and the government agencies under their jurisdiction.

CSC RO I held an Amateur Video-Making Contest for government workers. The video entries highlighted and showcased the selflessness and dedication of government frontliners in Region I, as well as depicted the beauty and importance of living despite the anxiety and uncertainty brought about by the pandemic.

CSC RO II held the virtual launching of *Region II Statistics and Stories/ Kwenta at Kwentong Dos* during the first week of September via its Facebook Page, with its first episode entitled *Region II Kwentong Pamanang Lingkod Bayani* garnering 1,001 viewers during airing. The *Region II Lingkod Bayan Stories and Diaries of Malasakit* held during the Linggo ng Malasakit via the RO's Facebook Page was participated in by government workers who are also writers, photographers, narrators, performers, videographers, and production designers. The documentation was broadcasted on 1 October with 2,700 viewers. A virtual Poem Tribute to Frontliners and Public Servants was also hosted by CSC RO II on 29 September featuring young performers from employees' families.

In Region III, CSC Field Offices held health and wellness activities for government agencies under their jurisdiction, plus a crowd funding initiative for printing commemorative shirts for employees undergoing therapy and also for health workers and frontliners. CSC FOs in the Region III also held videotaped and essay writing contests, while CSC Field Office-Bataan also held the *Vlogyanihan* contest from 1-28 September 2020.

CSC RO IV continued to strengthen its network and promote HR reforms by conducting the *Zoomustahan with HR Practitioners in Region IV* on 5 September as well as the Best HRMP and Technical Paper recognition program on 12 September, all via Zoom. Meanwhile, CSC Field Offices held a mixture of virtual and onsite activities such as the *Virtual Meeting of the Oriental Mindoro Council of HR Practitioners*, as well as counseling services on HR law and rules, coastal clean up and mangrove planting, and blood drives in different municipalities in Romblon.

CSC RO V kicked off the anniversary with their virtual Zumba program "ZOOMBaile", entitled

ZOOMayaw, ZOOMabay, Para ZOOMigla ang Buhay held on 4 September. The RO held the *Chef Hero Challenge: A Cooking Contest for Government Workers and Soup Kitchen Project for Medical Frontliners*, a virtual cooking challenge through the conduct of soup kitchen activity for the medical frontliners of Josefina Belmonte Duran Memorial Hospital in Ligao City. Video entries of their recipes were posted on the RO's Facebook Page, with the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology V garnering the most number of positive reactions and bagging the Netizens' Choice Award. During the judging day on 17 September, all participants were required to provide actual packs of the same combo meal that was featured on their cooking video. Together, they were able to provide meals for 188 frontliners of the said hospital as a special lunch treat. CSC RO V also launched the Barter for a Cause program via its Facebook Page, where employees posted pre-loved items for sale and buyers will pay via reams of bond paper as the currency. Running from 7 August to 20 September 20, the sale was able to collect a total of 127 reams of bond paper, which were donated by CSC RO V to the Rawis Elementary School in Legazpi City on 21 September.

CSC RO VI launched the *i-Storya* Digital Magazine that featured heroism, sacrifices, exemplary performance, and innovation of government workers. On *Linggo ng Yamang Tao*, CSC RO VI hosted the eSummit on PRIME-HRM on 15 September to help government agencies achieve PRIME-HRM Maturity Level 2. The regional office also held online learning and developments courses on mental health (17 September) and coaching and mentoring (18 September) to help government workers cope during the crisis.

CSC RO VII hosted the *Virtual Forum on Philippine Civil Service @120: Public Sector in the Age of Digital Transformation* on 3 September. This forum showcased the best practices in technology-driven HR and OD while serving as a venue for HR practitioners to reconnect with their counterparts from various agencies in Region VII. The RO also launched its One-Stop Website during the forum. This website transformed the RO's manual frontline services to a digital system, with features such as online booking of appointment, online drop box, ePayment drop box, TeleConsult, FAQs, customer feedback, client health status check, and other relevant information and services.

CSC RO VIII kicked off the month-long celebration with a Virtual "Zomba", a Zumba session held via Zoom, on 1 September at 6 a.m., with 29 participating agencies from across the region. For the community, the regional office gave out personal protective equipment or PPEs to frontliners of different local government units in Northern Samar from 14-18 September, and implemented the *Bond Paper Mo, Edukasyon*

Ko program in partnership with Samar's HR management practitioners on 29 September.

CSC RO IX offered virtual learning and development programs such as the *Orientation on Republic Act No. 6713* and the *Basic Customer Service Skills under the New Normal*. The regional office also launched the Digital Arts Contest, with the awards ceremony held on 29 September. The contest was open to all Filipino citizens in this region, and promoted recognition and appreciation of heroic deeds of government frontliners and public servants during the pandemic. The online trivia contest dubbed *Guess What?* was also held on 11, 17, 23, and 30 September via the CSC RO IX's Facebook Page to engage netizens with fun facts about the civil service.

CSC RO X held its virtual *Parangal, Pasasalamat* program on 30 September to honor the PRIME-HRM Bronze awardees, Outstanding Government Workers, PCSA Photography Contest regional winners, and loyalty awardees in Region X. CSC RO XI, on the other hand, launched the virtual version of two (2) of its learning and development courses: the Basic Supervisory Development Course (BSDC); and the 2017 Revised Rules on Administrative Cases on the Civil Service. These webinars gave government workers the opportunity to earn training hours or simply gain additional knowledge in the comfort of their own homes. Meanwhile, CSC RO XII held its PRIME-HRM Awards and regional awards rites as well.

CSC Regional Office-Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) hosted an online wellness program for government workers on 17 September, while CSC Caraga held a virtual mass oath-taking of government workers on 7 September to as a way of reminding them of their sworn duty as public servants.

In the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, CSC Field Office-Lanao del Sure held their *Kumustahan ng Council of Human Resource Management Practitioners* via Zoom on 4 September, while cleaning and tree planting activities were organized by the CSC FO-Maguindanao in cooperation with the local government units. The office blessing for CSC FO-Basilan was also held on 9 September.

The CSC National Capital Region also hosted a number of learning and development initiatives for government employees such as *Tech Trends During the Pandemic* (11 September), *Online Skills Sharing* (23 September), and *Online Forum on the COVID-19 Pandemic* (23 September).

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) is grateful to all the organizers, partners, and participants who made this year's 120th Philippine Civil Service Anniversary (PCSA) a success.

EXECUTIVE LETTER

STRENGTHENING THE CIVIL SERVICE UNDER THE NEW NORMAL

CSC Chairperson Alicia dela Rosa-Bala's message as a Panelist during the 6th Annual Public Policy Conference themed "Innovating Governance: Building Resilience Against COVID-19 and Other Risks, 22 September 2020, organized by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies

A pleasant morning! I thank PIDS for placing the limelight on the civil service especially this month when we mark its 120th year, along of course with the celebration of Development Policy Research Month.

We could not have had a more opportune time to take a closer look at that sector of society in charge of the day-to-day business of government. And the papers presented by Dr. Viroj and Dr. Aoki validated the critical role of the civil service during times of pandemic.

Allow me to touch briefly on their presentations and relate these to what is happening today in the Philippine civil service.

Dr. Viroj shared with us the courses of action taken by Thailand to address the pandemic. We certainly can draw lessons from Thailand's experience specifically on how and why its workforce, particularly the health workers, were able to ensure not just continuity of medical services but stability of its healthcare system. He highlighted several reasons for low COVID-19 transmission: adoption of a whole-of-government approach, strong community support and involvement in prevention measures, early and regular updating of national treatment guidelines, and implementation of definitive measures to prioritize the safety of health professionals and patients.

On the other hand, Dr. Aoki posited four mindsets which will enable civil servants to

face the new normal workplace: Openness to Innovation, Design Thinking and User Orientation, Trust in Technologies, and Care for the Digitally Disadvantaged.

There are common themes or threads in both presentations which run parallel to the state of affairs in the Philippine civil service. One, the need for stable governance mechanisms; two, the significance of capacity-building, and three, the heightened use of technology.

Thailand's whole-of-government approach characterized by multi-sectoral coordination but directed by one sole administrative body with a broad provincial network was an important element in managing the pandemic.

Here in the Philippines, the pandemic provided opportunities for government agencies, together with business, academe and civic organizations to adopt a whole-of-government approach in addressing people's needs. The same approach is being implemented in the civil service with its 1.7 million men and women spread in over 3,000 agencies nationwide, a management challenge for the CSC.

Building physical and human capacities is crucial in facing the pandemic and surviving the workplace of the future. Exponential growth in testing capacity enabled Thailand to arrest the spread of the virus. Design thinking and similar capacities that foster creativity and innovation spell solutions.

Capacity-building has been an uphill climb for the Philippine bureaucracy given the

broad range of skills and competencies in the government workforce. Equipping each civil servant with needed and appropriate knowledge and skills to enable him to perform his tasks and responsibilities well is important.

Technology became both an input and an outcome during the pandemic. Many of the initiatives undertaken by the Thai government were facilitated by technology – public communication that kept citizens informed of preventive measures and data collection that enabled the government to draw informed policy decisions. In Dr. Aoki's paper, the speed with which information spreads in a digital environment heralds trust issues specifically on the use of digital identity or of choosing whom to share our personal information with.

The Philippine bureaucracy has remained on the throes of harnessing technology for efficient and effective service delivery. To survive the future workplace, individuals and organizations in the public sector will have to adapt to and adopt technology.

In the midst of these issues is the Civil Service Commission, the central human resource agency of the Philippine government. Through civil service rules and HR management programs, it ensures that the government workforce is equipped with appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitude to deliver services to the public consistent with its Constitutional mandate.

The CSC also ensures that its HR programs are aligned with the goals of the Philippine

The Philippine bureaucracy has remained on the throes of harnessing technology for efficient and effective service delivery. To survive the future workplace, individuals and organizations in the public sector will have to adapt to and adopt technology.



CSC Chairperson Alicia dela Rosa-Bala's addresses attendees of the 6th Annual Public Policy Conference themed "Innovating Governance: Building Resilience Against COVID-19 and Other Risks" last 22 September 2020. The conference was organized by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies.



Development Plan under *Pillar 1: Enhancing the social fabric (Malasakit): There will be greater trust in public institutions and across all of society. Government will be people-centered, clean, and ... aim for... efficient governance...* Subsector Outcome 5: Civil Service Strengthened" states the need to improve the public's perception and trust toward civil servants who are expected to manifest professionalism, and ethical behavior and probity. It should promote shared public service values, improve human resource management systems and streamline processes, and invest in human resource. It is significant to note that for the first time, the PDP has explicitly underscored the pivotal role of the civil service.

Critical Civil Service Reforms

Allow me to present a number of initiatives implemented by the CSC to prepare the public sector workforce for the new normal.

As Dr. Aoki presented, innovation and design-thinking are necessary attributes of a high-performing civil service. As a 120-year old institution, the civil service cannot afford to be caught in a time warp of tradition. Incidentally, the Philippine Civil Service, not only the Civil Service Commission, is celebrating its 120th year this September with the theme *Public Sector in the Age of Digital Transformation*. We had agreed on the said theme since last year to drum up interest on the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Little did we know that the theme would be very timely and would reflect the circumstances during the pandemic when people, products, events and services were

pushed to become digital. The civil service has to be relevant and dynamic, adaptive to the changing human resource landscape. This is the reason for CSC's Program for the Institutionalization Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management or PRIME-HRM which aims to raise the maturity level of four critical HR systems in all government agencies - Recruitment, Selection and Placement System; Performance Management System; Learning and Development System; and Rewards and Recognition System. Envisioned to serve as a stable governance mechanism, PRIME-HRM drives agencies to aim for higher HR system maturity levels and meet global HR standards. PRIME-HRM examines an agency's capability to carry out its core HR systems and enables it to transition from Transactional to Process-Defined to Integrated and finally to Strategic HR. Strengthening these four systems will help address many ills besetting the bureaucracy.

Promoting Meritocracy and EOP in Recruitment, Selection and Placement (RSP)

CSC ensures that agencies adhere to the core principle of equal opportunity in recruitment and merit-based selection and placement as enshrined in the Civil Service Law and rules. The governance framework on RSP serves as basis for talent planning, sourcing and selection and placement in government.

The CSC has also put premium on competency-based recruitment. The

development of competency-based HR is linked closely with concerns on the professionalization of the civil service. While the CSC provides security of tenure to competent civil servants, it also has to insulate the civil service from patronage so that employees can focus on the work at hand and not worry about having to be under the good graces of superiors. The CSC emphasizes that security of tenure or continued stay in government service is performance-based.

RSP in the time of Covid-19

As appointments processing is documents-based, the imposition of community quarantines made it difficult for agencies to proceed with recruiting employees. Thus, CSC through Memo Circular No. 14, came up with Interim Guidelines on Appointments and Other Human Resource Actions which directed agencies to simplify, streamline and shorten the recruitment process. Online application, online profiling and video-based assessment now form part of the recruitment scenario. A number of policies on appointment processing were relaxed. CSC allowed the use of electronic signatures of appointing authorities. Posting of vacant positions may now be done thru the agency website or other job search engines. Related to this, CSC has been holding job fairs since 2018 as part of recruitment initiatives. Last week, the Commission, in partnership with Jobstreet, conducted a five-day job fair online as part of Civil Service anniversary activities. The CSC has also started the e-Appointments Processing project which targets paperless transactions in attesting/processing appointments issued by government agencies.

Engaging Employees Thru a Functioning Performance Management System

Performance management is an indicator of good governance; it is a barometer not solely of a civil servant's performance also reflective of an organization's standing.

The Strategic Performance Management System (SPMS) aims to empower employees by making one appreciate how one's individual performance is linked to attainment of organization goals. Studies show that

employees tend to perform better if they feel responsible for something—even if it be a small part of the overall organizational picture. This situation illustrates the importance of aligning individual performance with the organization's vision, mission, and strategic goals. We hope that through reforms in this system, our state employees will take their performance appraisals more seriously.

Performance Management In the Time of Covid-19

The pandemic presented performance management challenges given the new work arrangements during the quarantine period. Work targets and outputs had to be re-calibrated, affecting performance appraisal systems. Restrictions on mobility and face-to-face interaction resulted to revision of work plans.

Rationalizing and Improving Training and Development

People cannot do today's jobs with yesterday's skills. The increasingly complex demands of the citizenry and governance should be matched with concomitant changes in learning and development. The CSC continually strengthens its capability to build a workforce, competent and armed with the necessary skills and handles. For this role, the Commission has a dedicated facility, the Civil Service Institute or CSI.

The CSI carries out the Commission's learning and development agenda, anchored on purposive studies on the employee development needs of agencies. CSI's L&D programs cover training program development and actual conduct of training on a wide range of topics - from administrative to technical to managerial, from soft skills training to sessions on specialized courses. It brokers competency development solutions by creating strategic partnerships and continuing engagement with thought leaders, learning process experts and talent managers across the bureaucracy.

These training interventions are also offered by CSC regional offices.

L&D in the Time of Covid-19

The past months saw shifts in needed work competencies and capacities. Alternative work arrangement including remote working have made digital literacy a required skill set for the new normal. Adversity quotient has surfaced as an essential attribute. Leadership, self-regulation, agility, empathy, communication and collaboration skills are also important competencies to ensure continued productivity during these challenging times. Unfortunately, because of the pandemic, traditional learning and development activities are not feasible.

CSC has begun its transition to E-learning even before the pandemic. Not only is it cost-effective; it permits wider reach and offers flexibility for in-demand learning.

Promoting Excellence and Efficiency Thru Rewards and Incentives

Excellence acknowledged is excellence nurtured. Most visible of the Commission's strategies in this area is the annual search for public officials and employees where it recognizes those who have made exceptional contributions and those who have demonstrated high ethical standards. Government agencies are encouraged to level up their rewards and incentives schemes as a good people management practice.

The Honor Awards Program In the Time of Covid-19

In keeping up with the times, the Search for Outstanding Government Workers are now being conducted via digital technology. Where before, nomination folders were submitted, scanned copies of nomination documents are now transmitted. Screening through review of soft copies of nomination folders have

been done at the regional level through our CSC regional offices and will now progress to deliberations at the national level also through on-line platforms.

Other Worker-friendly Initiatives

The disruption caused by the pandemic called for courses of action that would balance safety and productivity. CSC has prepared the bureaucracy for such eventualities. Implemented this year is the Occupational Health and Safety Standard, a first for the bureaucracy, drawn up by the Commission together with the Health and Labor and Employment Departments through Joint Circular No. 1 issued in March 2020. In support of the Mental Health Act, CSC crafted the guidelines for the establishment of mental health programs in the public sector in consultation with medical experts and other stakeholders. CSC has encouraged government agencies to have mental health programs, a timely intervention given the psychological impact of the pandemic in everyday life. CSC also mobilized government and non-government organizations offering counselling and psychological services which state employees may tap through on-line consultation.

The Guidelines on the Alternative Work Arrangements (AWA), contained in CSC Memo Circular No. 7 and 10 both issued during the community quarantine, had the most impact among government workers as it allowed five alternative work arrangements: work from home, skeletal workforce, four-day workweek, flexiwork or work shifting or a combination of the four work arrangements. The public sector experience in these alternative work arrangements are now being examined or studied by the Commission as inputs for future work policies. We are also currently preparing civil service guidelines on work arrangement as areas transition from General Community Quarantine to Modified GCQ. Memo Circular No. 10 also permitted assignment of medical

People cannot do today's jobs with yesterday's skills. The increasingly complex demands of the citizenry and governance should be matched with concomitant changes in learning and development.



The civil service can best deliver public service excellence if it does not work in silos but works as one in an integrated manner.



and allied staff to be reassigned or detailed to other government hospitals or temporary health facilities in support of the *Bayanihan Heal As One Act*. The same holds true for licensed professionals willing to be transferred or detailed to healthcare facilities.

Other important regulations issued by the CSC to address employee safety and protection during the pandemic include Memo Circular No. 8 which outlined procedures on the use of leave privileges for absences due to quarantine and/or treatment of Covid-19 and MC No. 9 which gave a 60-day extension of the filing of the 2019 Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Networth (SALN). Also on SALN, Memo Circular No. 13 allowed on-line oath-taking between the administering officer and declarant as well as on-line filing of the SALN, subject to certain conditions due to Quarantine and/or Treatment in Relation to COVID-19 Pandemic

Philippine Talent Management Strategy

To address the future-proofing of the Philippine civil service, the CSC in partnership with the various organizations is institutionalizing the Philippine Talent Management Strategy (PTMS). The program will be the framework to strengthen the civil service by addressing future needs and challenges at the global, regional and national level. The PTMS supports the effective management of public sector talent enabled by people-centered, technology-enabled, clean, efficient, effective, and green governance.

The PTMS has a three-point strategy starting with harnessing strategic talents by capacitating a future-ready workforce, led by future-ready leaders toward a more capable and smart organization, anchored on shared public service values. The civil service must use available resources and existing data and information to improve service delivery. The future state of the civil service should have:

1. Future-Ready Leaders and Workforce

a. Future-ready Leaders who are Visionary, People-Centric, Connected, Collaborative, and Culturally Intelligent, Analytic, Creative & Innovative, and Techno Savvy

A future-ready civil service is one that is steered by leaders who are visionary and goal-oriented. These leaders shall be able to develop and improve the competencies, capabilities and capacities of their workforce toward being future-ready and improve organizational performance.

b. Future-Ready Workforce that is Involved and Engaged, Socially Responsible, Performance-Oriented, Assertive, Analytic, Creative & Innovative, and Techno Savvy

We need a workforce that is engaged, is aligned to the vision of the organization and is driven by shared values of the organization such that it is able to exert exceptional effort in the delivery of excellent public service. A future-ready workforce is also that which is socially responsible — concerned with how the services it renders affect and benefit society. It is able to harness technology to simplify, streamline and improve service delivery.

2. Smart Organizations that are Engaged, Performance-Oriented, Assertive and Innovative, Capacitated, Tech-Savvy

The civil service can best deliver public service excellence if it does not work in silos but works as one in an integrated manner. This requires a civil service that is inclusive, efficient and green. It takes care not only of the people it serves but also of the people who serve to ensure sustainable excellence in the delivery of public service.

3. Shared Public Service Values

Organizations of the future advocate the adoption of shared values as these provide the anchor for individual and organizational transformation. The CSC has led the way in this aspect by espousing *Patriotism, Integrity, Excellence and Spirituality*. These values are embedded in the organization's culture, manifested in their work ethic. CSC has recast Public Service Values Program into Public Service Values in Times of Adversities. The new model looks at the environment unfolding and provides state employees the anchor to handle situations that challenge their service values so as not lose sight of the basic tenet of their stay in government that: *Public Service is a Public Trust*. (Article XI, Section 1, 1987 Philippine Constitution)

Conclusion

In conclusion, in order to Strengthen the Civil Service under the New Normal, there is a need to focus on human resource management and organizational development. Key to strengthening the civil service is organization development founded on the review of systems and structures. Second, engaging and capacitating human resources will determine the organization's course. Third, advocating shared public service values will provide the anchor on which all decisions shall be based.

As the Philippine civil service continuously evolves and anticipates imminent changes, it is moving forward, not just to a new but to a "better" normal. Critical civil service reforms will enable the Philippine government to be agile and innovative and move in sync with the rest of the world.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay ang serbisyo publiko!



Shifting HR practices in the time of COVID-19
What does the HR landscape look like now and in a post-pandemic world?
(Part 2 of 2)

This is the second installment of our two-part series on shifting HR practices in the time of COVID-19. The previous release focused on prioritizing the workforce's health and safety, entering the virtual workspace, and championing e-learning and development. Grab your copy from bit.ly/CSReporter2ndQuarter2020.

Part 2 of this series highlights emerging practices and practical tips on (1) recruitment and selection, (2) onboarding, and (3) performance management.

Recruitment and Selection

Just like how any other activities at work have gone online, recruitment and selection now need a major shift from outdated hiring practices to remote online strategy. Organizations that are still obsessed with papers and traditional way of recruiting are losing the game of headhunting the high

performing and highly qualified candidates in the labor market.

While online recruitment has been in the air for quite some time now, never have so many organizations jumped into this practice since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is an unavoidable shift since face-to-face interactions and physical exposure are discouraged. What sort of changes are needed to adopt online recruitment and selection?

• Employer Branding

Before jumping right into online recruitment and selection tips, one vital element that an organization needs to revisit is its employer branding. This serves as a backbone to an organization's offline and online presence. What is employer branding anyway and why does it matter in this time of crisis?

A brand is usually known as a business' identifying mark to distinguish itself from others. But the deeper essence of a brand is a company's reputation and the experience that it wants its customers to feel about its products and services. In the same way, an employer's brand is its reputation as an employer, and the experience it creates for employees and potential candidates.

Employer branding has always been important in the entire hiring process because it upholds the idea that recruitment and selection is a two-way street: the organization selecting the candidate, and vice versa.

Do you know your employer brand? If not sure yet, ask your employees about how they feel working for the organization. Listen to their experiences, especially during the pandemic. How does the organization care for them? What are



Photo by Scott Graham on Unsplash

samples of incentives and benefits given to employees? Does the organization value its people's learning and development? How does the organization handle remote work and onboarding?

If you are an HR Manager or a Communications Manager, spend some time to figure this out so you would know how to promote the organization as an employer online, or know what experiences need improvement. This is crucial in attracting potential candidates.

• **Online presence**

Believe it or not, your organization's online presence can spell its credibility especially now when all job seekers are online. The way an organization's website and official social media accounts look like can either pull or push away potential candidates. Not only the visual elements to a site or Page matter, but also the tone/voice that you use to communicate with stakeholders—in this particular instance, how an organization advertises a job opportunity and encourages the job seeker to click the "Apply" button. All these factors and what we have discussed under Employer Branding should be well articulated online.

Here are some points to consider when optimizing your online presence as an employer:

- **Searchability** – Make sure that people know your website and that your social media handles are uniform or at least easily searchable. Job seekers though would more likely go to your website to look for job opportunities. This leads us to the next point.
 - **UX-optimized website** – Is your website designed to give an excellent user experience (UX)? This means that when people click your website, it should be easy on the eyes, easy to navigate, and easy to access even through mobile phone. Most people nowadays access the Internet through their smartphones, and if your IT team did not do its job in UX design, people will jump on to another website and who knows how many highly competent candidates you just lost.
- Remember to make it easy for candidates to see the job vacancies, to read through all the information that they need to know about to know about the job opportunity, and to submit all the requirements needed online.

- **Tone** – How do you communicate with your intended audience? Do you still adopt the traditional, authoritative, and straightforward tone (i.e., government/bureaucratic tone)? If this works for your organization, fine. But in the age of social media, organizations must be mindful of connecting with the public in a much empathic and socially appealing manner. Consider how you would physically encourage a person to apply to your organization. Would you not say amazing things about your organization, flaunt the benefits, talk about your workplace culture, etc.? Compare the two sample job advertisements below and see which one entices you more:

JOIN OUR TEAM!

If you are someone with a proven track record of leading teams with utmost integrity and professionalism, you might just be the one we are looking for!

The CSC Human Resource Policies and Standards Office (HRPSO) is in urgent need of a Chief Human Resource Specialist to join its team. The CSC workforce values patriotism, integrity, excellence, and spirituality. We also value *malasakit* or compassion both for our employees and stakeholders. This has been highlighted at the onset of COVID-19. Now, more than ever, employee wellness is given much focus and attention in our organization.

If you are interested to join the CSC workforce, know the full details below:

<insert qualifications, job description, and submission details>

We hope that you consider joining other dedicated civil servants at CSC.

All the best in your application!

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Join our workforce:

Chief Human Resource Specialist
Salary Grade: 24
Eligibility: Career Service (Professional)/
Second Level Eligibility
Education: Master's Degree or
Certificate in Leadership and
Management from the CSC
Training: 40 hours of training
<Insert Competencies and other
qualifications>

Submit your application to:
<insert details>

• **Online infrastructure**

When you shortlist applicants, where do you lead them for job interviews and written exams? Make sure that your organization has the proper infrastructure to facilitate the remaining steps in the hiring process. Whether it is through Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, or other virtual meeting apps, let the shortlisted applicant know the details. Do not also forget the personnel selection board because they also have to meet virtually to deliberate the results and finally select the rightful candidate.

Email sequencing is also a must. From the time the applicant showed up on your HR's inbox to the announcement of hiring or sending regrets, it is now a must to let the person know the necessary information every step of the way. Gone are the days when HR would say "Don't call us. We'll call you," because in the age of experience management, this traditional practice is now considered rude and outdated. HR instead must manage the applicant's entire experience by taking note of vital touch points throughout the process. Email sequencing would greatly help in this. Start thinking about your email copy for each of the following touch points:

- An applicant submits his/her job application
- An applicant passes the initial screening and needs to take the written exam through online mode
- An applicant did not get shortlisted/did not pass the initial screening
- An applicant moves forward to the virtual interview process
- An applicant was not selected for the position
- An applicant was selected for the position and can move forward to completing other requirements (e.g., medical, NBI clearance, etc.)
- An applicant needs to do virtual oath taking

Onboarding

Onboarding is equally vital to the employer and the new employee. It is "the process of integrating a new employee with a company and its culture, as well as getting a new hire the tools and information needed to become a productive member of the team." (Society for Human Resource Management)

With the ongoing pandemic, HR managers face the challenge of onboarding new employees remotely. Such is especially the case for organizations that have been programmed for so many years to do



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onboarding physically. Challenging as it may be, this is also a perfect opportunity for organizations to reimagine the employee experience that they would like to give employees starting Day 1. What will onboarding look like today and post-COVID?

The essentials of onboarding should matter most to give your new hires a running start albeit being done remotely:

- **Access to equipment and technology** – It is a given: All is on the virtual workspace. Giving your new employee the proper access to equipment and technology is perhaps the best thing you should tick off your onboarding checklist on Day 1. Without a PC, the necessary software and online meeting tools, and Internet connection, do not expect that the new employee will be able to participate well in the next onboarding activities.
- **Connect with other new employees** – This is a norm in physical onboarding. New hires get to know each other and listen to their stories about their previous job, why they applied for their current role, and the like. They also tend to keep this batch of connections as they stay in the organization for the succeeding years.

Keep this element present in the virtual onboarding.

- **Connect with team members and leaders** – This is the perfect time for the new employee to know his/her team members or unit mates. This is also the time when the new hire is oriented on the specific online tools that the team is using, as different teams may have different preferences. The team leader or Director must also take this opportunity to provide the bigger picture of what the office is doing so that the new hire would know how his/her role becomes an important piece of a larger puzzle.
- **Connect with key people in other offices** – For sure, new employees will have to interact with people from different offices or departments within your agency. It will greatly help them if they know at least one from each office, or a directory of focal persons to contact for specific concerns (who-to-talk-to-about-what). For example, who should the employee reach out to in terms of filing leaves, or availing of employee benefits? Connecting new hires with these focal persons can be done through a scheduled virtual meeting, or loop everyone in an email with the

directory of these key people, complete with their profile photos for easier identification.

- **Provide all the necessary information that a new employee needs to know** – An Employee Handbook and/or a Workplace Culture Playbook is vital in onboarding. Having one for the whole organization would save a lot of time and effort in explaining each point. The HR may also arrange a live Q&A session with the new hires and the key people who can answer relevant questions.
- **Personalized executive letter or a welcome video message from the head of the organization** – This is extremely important to build a personal relationship with the new hires. While it is nearly impossible to gather a batch of new employees for a physical onboarding session and having the Chairperson speak in front of them, we can still create a similar experience through alternative modes such as virtual conference or a personalized email! Even if it is just an email containing a welcome message in text or video, as long as there is the employee's name on it, it would mean a lot. The key here is personalization. How

would you feel getting a message from the head of the organization addressed directly to you? That is the kind of employee experience that you would want to create during onboarding.

Performance Management

It is perhaps the most dreaded activity in a year between direct reports and their managers—performance management and evaluation.

HR thought leaders, however, have long urged organizations to transform performance reviews into quality feedback conversations with employees that focus on helping them in their growth and development. Organizations who have not yet done this shift need to double their effort in conducting performance reviews in the COVID-19 setting because there are now other factors that must be considered.

- **Recalibrating targets** – Performance ties the gap between a goal and success. For decades, workers have been programmed to think of performance reviews as direct evaluation whether a person was successful in meeting his/her performance targets or not. Certainly, this is crucial in ensuring workers' productivity and success, but the circumstances that make an employee successful prior to COVID-19 might be very different at the present situation. This is why it is important for everyone to be empathic these days and consider recalibrating targets, especially those that have now become impossible to meet due to the ongoing pandemic. It is even suggested for managers to revisit what is being measured or evaluated in these trying times, and not only focus on the transactional aspect of performance. Managers may highlight an employee's resilience, the capacity to adapt and collaborate amid the difficult situation.

By recalibrating targets, employees would feel that they are understood and valued, and that their wellness and safety are of utmost importance.

- **Frequency and approach** – In a traditional organization, performance evaluation usually happens only once or twice a year, while others do it quarterly. But in a situation where people are physically distant, real-time or in-the-moment feedback becomes vital in engagement and performance. A manager does not need to wait for six (6) months to check how an employee is doing, or to gather incident reports that would justify one's incompetence or unproductivity. In the same way, an employee does not need to wait for that long to figure out whether he/she needs some coaching conversation with a peer or a manager. People now would appreciate a more real-time, authentic performance conversations that are almost embedded in the new normal life. These conversations are flexible to include casual check ins, discussion on current concerns or challenges (including personal), performance coaching, and development plans. If such organic conversations become as normal as breathing, then performance management and evaluation will not be too heavy a task for both managers and employees. Rather, it will contribute to a healthy remote work culture.
- **Ratings** – Just as some schools have done away with student grades when COVID-19 disrupted the education sector, some leadership and management experts have also suggested for organizations to temporarily suspend numerical ratings during performance evaluation. Certainly, due to the circumstance, employees will not be able to keep up to the same standards prior to COVID-19. It is understandable though that only organizations which

have built high level of trust and agility are the ones who are able to do away with numerical rating immediately. This means that any changes in expectations between managers and employees during this crisis are clear, and that they trust that they will keep themselves accountable according to these set expectations. Meanwhile, organizations that still see the need to do numerical rating in performance evaluation might need to revisit the standards and metrics being measured during the rating period. As mentioned in the first point, "recalibrating targets", managers and employees need to discuss necessary adjustments to performance targets, and/or alter what is being measured.

Indeed, remote work is something new to many of us, especially to those working in the public sector. For the first time in history, government agencies were left with no choice but to do adopt alternative work arrangements that would allow continuous productivity despite working remotely. TIME magazine has called this event as the "world's largest work-from-home experiment". Certainly, organizations are now experimenting with new practices and systems that would ensure their survival.

In this two-part series "Shifting HR practices in the time of COVID-19: What does the HR landscape look like now and in a post-pandemic world?" the CS Reporter hopes to give you practical tips and advice that you can use in your quest to shape your organization's new normal. We also hope that the new insights and perspectives presented in this series will empower you to look into the future of HR with new lens and optimism.

Share your organization's transformation story with us by sending an email to csc.pmr@gmail.com.

More than half a year into this global pandemic and there is still a lot of anxiety and uncertainty going around. People worry that they or a loved one could get sick any day. Longing to be in the company of family and friends can trigger loneliness or hopelessness. Concerns about job security are looming over their heads like a dark cloud.

In times of crisis, people naturally feel unsettled and stressed, and they tend to lose focus and control. They will turn to leaders for guidance, for reassurance and a way forward. What does this mean for organizations? As unprecedented as the current situation may be, the role of leaders in an organization remains the same. However, a good leader has to understand how the new reality is shaping the world of work and be quick to adapt.

The public sector leader of today is faced with the tremendous challenge of balancing public interest and workers' health and safety. How can they keep civil servants motivated amid the chaos? How can they manage performance in a blended work environment? How can they bring the team together to work on a better post-crisis future?

We can look at these questions from a *competency* perspective. Competency is defined as the combination of observable and measureable knowledge, skills, and abilities that enable and improve job performance. There are five (5) Leadership Competencies prescribed for division chiefs and executives/managers in government based on CSC Resolution No. 1500615.

How can these leadership competencies be applied in the context of the COVID-19 situation?

1. Leading Change

The pandemic has presented itself as an opportunity to introduce changes in policies and processes. It has significantly affected workers' lives that they naturally understand the need for change. They tend to be more open now to trying new ideas that could improve the situation.

As easy as it may be to get buy-in, leaders should still be able to communicate clearly any new goals or direction to keep employees engaged. They should also be consistent by modeling the changes they want to see. The American Psychological Association, in the article entitled *How Leaders Can Maximize Trust and Minimize Stress During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, explains it simply:

"Leaders need to be the first to embrace new policies such as cutting back on

Pandemic-Proof: Essential Competencies for the Public Sector Leader

*travel and practicing social distancing. People will follow the example of leaders they respect."*ⁱ

When communicating with employees, leaders should project calm and confidence by showing that they understand the situation in the organization. Acknowledge that it is a difficult time for everybody but remain optimistic. They should lay down the facts and be honest about existing and anticipated problems.

Any change initiative should be deliberate and systematic. Lead the team in reviewing and recalibrating goalposts. What targets should be continued? What can be pushed to a later time and what can be dispensed with? What new projects can be initiated that would be relevant to the current situation?

In implementing change, leaders should also make clear the roles and responsibilities of people and offices involved, as well as provide the needed resources.

2. Building Collaborative, Inclusive Working Relationships

COVID-19 has thrown us into the same sea of threats and unknowns—rich and poor, old and young, managers and employees alike. Effective leaders should be able to bring the team together in making sense of the situation and in implementing change. Do not expect to know all the answers. Instead, engage employees by giving them a role and allowing them to develop a sense of ownership for their contributions.

When leaders are inclusive, employees feel valued and are more cooperative. Constantly check in on them, find out their unique situation, and create a safe space for them to be honest about their concerns. Then work on a solution together. Do you have a staff who cannot cope with the work-from-home arrangement? What is the root of the problem? If it is an issue of competency, how can he/she be given learning and development support? If it is an

issue of resources, is there a way for him/her to be allowed to borrow office equipment? If he/she finds it difficult to balance work and domestic duties, what support can be extended so he/she can physically report to the office?

Leaders should also cultivate partnerships with fellow leaders, learn from them, and find ways of working together for greater efficiency and synergistic outcomes.

3. Managing Performance and Coaching for Results

In this time of crisis, a more grounded approach to performance management is essential. As stated in the article, *How to Do Performance Reviews – Remotely*, published in Harvard Business Review:

"People are wrestling with uncertainty and existential dread," he says. Suffice it to say, your employees — even those not directly affected by the health emergency — are not operating at their best. When it comes to evaluating their job performance, "there's no template and it's not one size fits all," says Anna Tavis, a clinical associate professor of human capital management at New York University and an editor at People + Strategy, a journal for HR executives. "Everyone is stretched in their own way," she says. Your goal, therefore, is "to make an empathetic assessment" based on "where your people are.""ⁱⁱ

Be compassionate but also fair. Employees trust leaders to know the difference between an employee trying his or her best to deliver while coping with difficulties, and one who simply refuses to cooperate. If there is a need to be firm in terms of assessing performance, be firm.

Moreover, when operating in a blended work environment, it can be easier for leaders to set a regular coaching schedule so employees would know the exact times when the "coach is in", whether at the office or virtually.

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4. Thinking Strategically and Creatively

When thinking about strategic direction, leaders should be able to see the “big picture”. Understanding this crisis means not only knowing how to respond to the current issues, but also how things might play out in the long run and how to prepare for it. For example, as organizations quickly shifted to digital systems and processes, will the demand for online services continue even after the pandemic? If so, how would this impact on hiring, promoting, and developing workers?

Explore linkages within and outside the organization that will be useful for the change initiatives to be introduced, and initiate dialogues with them. This is echoed in the article, *Tuning In, Turning Outward: Cultivating Compassionate Leadership in a Crisis*, published online by management consultancy firm McKinsey and Company. It says:

“Leaders are uniquely positioned to ignite hope and create the image of a future

*organization people are excited to be a part of. Actively engage in open dialogue with various stakeholders to share their diagnoses of the crisis and their prognoses of how to emerge from it into a reimagined next normal... The goal is to refocus individuals away from trauma and toward a better future for themselves and the business as well.”*ⁱⁱⁱ

Organizations now have to respond quickly to changing clients’ needs. Foster creativity by structuring team meetings such that employees are given the chance to come up with new ideas for dealing with these changes. Make it fun by turning a brainstorming activity into a contest.

5. Creating and Nurturing a High-Performing Organization

Crisis or no crisis, the public deserves effective public service from the government. Thus, it is important for leaders to constantly remind employees that their reason for being in government is to serve the public. At the same time, leaders should

present a clear post-pandemic vision and communicate messages of optimism and hope. These can create a shared sense of purpose and commitment that can inspire employees to rise above the challenges. The best leaders are those who can rally the workforce into action under the most difficult circumstances.

However, to sustain commitment, leaders should also take care of people. For example, how can employees in the office focus on delivering outputs when they feel constantly threatened due to the lack of health and safety protocols? As McKinsey and Company puts it:

“It is difficult to ask employees preoccupied with their basic needs to focus on productivity. Alleviating these basic concerns for people will free up their capacity to keep contributing to your organization’s purpose and strategic objectives.”^{iv}

Moreover, leaders should look at the organizational culture and see what has changed or what needs to be changed to drive performance. For example, the pandemic has proven to be a lesson on cross-geographical and cross-cultural inclusivity. Companies that are headquarters-centric have now realized how easy it can be to involve employees in various locations using technology. Moving forward, leaders can introduce policies which would allow a more structured way to create geographically dispersed teams and achieve remote collaboration.

Beyond having these competencies, another important thing we need from leaders today is HEART. Ask employees to take a break if needed, offer help whether it is about work or personal affairs, give people a well-deserved pat on the back. Effective leaders are able to not only express empathy, compassion, and gratitude but to teach others to do so as well. Leaders are humans, too, and they are also affected by the pandemic. They could benefit from a more positive and supportive community they themselves built in the first place.

What the COVID-19 pandemic has done in recent months is to redirect leaders’ sights toward employee welfare. Human resource, after all, is the lifeblood of an organization and this holds true in both normal situations and during a crisis.

Staying the Course: How PIDS dealt with the COVID-19 crisis and what kept them afloat

Guest Contributor: Dr. Sheila V. Siar, Department Manager, Research Information, Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS). The insights presented here are the author’s and do not represent the position of the organization where she belongs. Email for correspondence: ssiar@mail.pids.gov.ph.

Introduction

The sudden closure of offices due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the ensuing community quarantines left many organizations baffled on how to respond. While crisis communication guidelines are in place for some organizations, these guidelines are insufficient to address a large-scale crisis.

My own organization, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), was not spared. When an internal advisory was released on the evening of March 11 to inform staff members that no one can enter the office due to a confirmed positive case of COVID-19, the immediate reaction was panic among the staff for their safety and that of their families. The management immediately allayed fears by informing everyone that the necessary precautionary and preventive measures to avert any possible transmission were being implemented. Contact tracing also ensued at once. A temporary work-from-home (WFH) policy that emphasized the use of telecommunication platforms in the discharge of functions was also declared. A public advisory was also issued through the organization’s website and social media pages.

The organization’s resilience was put to the test throughout the weeks and months that followed when Metro Manila and other areas were placed under community quarantine. Six months after, we have managed to sustain our operations despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis. Reflecting on our experience during this period as an insider,

various factors are worth noting that helped us navigate through the crisis. If I can pin down the major one, I would say that it is all about the system. Below are some of my reflections to support this statement.

1. Digitization and digitalization are already embedded in the organization’s lifeblood.

Digitization and digitalization are essential processes that should be embraced to thrive in the new normal. Working and communicating online and providing services through digital tools have become the norm. For us, there was not much transition to do as we have embarked on these processes years ago—gradually at first until they have become fully integrated into our system.

The organization is one of the first government agencies in the Philippines to have 24-hour access to the internet through dial-up connection when the internet was introduced in the early 1990s. It is also among the first government agencies to have a web presence (<https://www.pids.gov.ph>).

In the early 2000s, the organization launched an initiative to digitize all its knowledge products from as far back as 1979 and build an online repository of socioeconomic studies.

Resources were continuously invested both in hardware and software, which were regularly upgraded and updated, and in training people on the use of information and communications technology (ICT). The organization also capitalized on the

power of social media in promoting its research outputs and engaging the public in the discussion of policy issues. Its active presence on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/PIDS.PH/>) and Twitter (https://twitter.com/pids_ph) has enabled it to be visible to its customers and remain responsive to their needs.

With the temporary suspension of face-to-face data collection activities for its research projects, the organization immediately explored ways on how to collect data remotely through modern technologies. It also shifted to virtual platforms such as webinars to disseminate research findings. As of September 1, it has conducted 17 public webinars.

2. A quality management system is in place

The organization’s journey in establishing a quality management system (QMS) and being ISO compliant took almost five years. But having a QMS in place proved to be useful for several reasons.

First, our QMS was risk-based, thus ensured business continuity and better emergency management. Our risk and opportunity plan has allowed us to anticipate challenges and plan for them ahead of time. Although the COVID-19 health emergency was far from our minds when we reassessed the plan early this year, its occurrence was an eye-opener for us to widen our analysis of possible crisis scenarios that may occur in the future.



Conference rooms are gathering dust as organizations are forced to hold meetings online. How can a leader foster teamwork and collaboration amid the pandemic?

Photo by Adrien Olichon on Unsplash

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ⁱⁱⁱ Nielsen, N. et al. (1 May 2020) Tuning in, turning outward: Cultivating compassionate leadership in a crisis. Accessed at <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/tuning-in-turning-outward-cultivating-compassionate-leadership-in-a-crisis#>

^{iv} Ibid.

Second, the system espoused communication with both internal and external customers. The management ensured that the staff members have accurate and relevant information on safety and security measures, available support services, and work-related guidelines. At the same time, external customers were regularly updated on how they can access the organization's knowledge products and services under the prevailing work arrangement.

Third, even when everyone was working remotely and interaction was virtual, there was a common understanding of the business processes. Implementation and monitoring of tasks were, therefore, less complicated, and adjustments in strategies given new normal requirements were also easier to plan and execute.

3. The system allows for flexibility with accountability

In compliance with government regulations, alternative work arrangements (AWAs) were adopted to address the need for physical distancing while ensuring that work in the public sector was sustained. Among the various AWAs recommended by the Civil Service Commission, the organization chose a combination of skeleton workforce and WFH as the option that was best suited to the nature of its core business, which is research.

Working from home, also known as remote work or telework, was already in progress in some industries, but the pandemic has hastened the demand for public sector to adopt immediately. Having more flexible working hours allowed employees to adjust to real-life challenges while quarantined at home with the family. These challenges include the need to divide time between virtual office work and childcare or housework, and assisting children in online classes.

Within the organization, specific guidelines were established to facilitate the smooth implementation of the WFH. Among these were the provision of internet cost subsidy and computer for those without a unit to use at home, and setting up of core hours within which

employees should be available to take calls, answer messages, and attend meetings.

Part of the guidelines was the submission of accomplishment reports and work plans every two weeks. This was done to instill accountability and to facilitate efficient monitoring of tasks, accomplishments, and gaps.

4. The system encourages feedback and continual improvement

The organization capitalizes on continuous feedback loops to identify issues that need to be resolved at the earliest possible time.

Two months after the WFH was introduced, a survey on staff's remote work experiences was conducted. Questions dealt with access to and reliability of internet connection, technology resources needed to work from home effectively, adequacy of internet cost subsidy, perception of productivity under the current scheme, challenges encountered, and suggestions on how to make the scheme effective.

Based on the results, appropriate interventions were implemented. Among others, these included assistance in remotely accessing office computer files and the installation of essential software programs. Monthly virtual seminars on keeping physical and mental health and coping with stress were also organized with healthcare professionals as resource persons.

5. The people—the most crucial system component—are agile and innovative

In today's fast-paced world, which is marked by disruptive change and endless possibilities, being agile and innovative is essential for continuity and survival. A resilient system can withstand shocks and crises because it is agile and innovative. Its agility, or the ability to adapt and transform, renders stability to the system. At the same time, it is dynamic, not stagnant. Such dynamism stems from its ability to continuously innovate its processes, methods, products, and services.

In dealing with the pandemic and the subsequent changes in work arrangement, the management quickly responded by recalibrating strategies and processes, providing clear guidance to staff members, installing the guidelines and necessary support measures for the WFH and skeleton workforce arrangements, and keeping communication lines with the staff open through virtual team meetings and monthly general assemblies.

Meanwhile, the staff members, through the employee's association, did their part by providing regular feedback to management on their needs and concerns, and suggestions to sustain productivity in a virtual work environment. The association also initiated sharing sessions among their members on how to work from home effectively.

Collaboration is the glue

Allow me to discuss one final point, which is the glue that made everything possible—collaboration. Collaboration is a crucial element for keeping an organization agile and innovative. It enables ideas to flow freely, which stimulates innovation. Because it promotes trust and inclusion, the organization quickly adapts to changes with the support and buy-in of its members and external customers.

This article is not to say that we have a perfect system. There are still many things to improve on. Continuous learning and development is part of the organization's culture.

This September, the theme of the Development Policy Research Month (DPRM), which coincides with the celebration of the Civil Service Month, is "Bouncing Back Together: Innovating Governance in the New Normal". The DPRM, which is led by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), is a nationwide event that aims to promote the importance of policy research in evidence-based planning and decisionmaking. By focusing on this theme, the PIDS hopes to raise awareness of the importance of continuous innovation to remain resilient in the new normal. For more information, visit <https://dprm.pids.gov.ph>.

LINGKOD BAYANI

CSC PAGASA AWARDEES:

Spotlight on early adopters of digital transformation

The theme of the celebration of the 120th Philippine Civil Service Anniversary, "Philippine Civil Service @120: Public Sector in the Age of Digital Transformation," highlights the need for the bureaucracy to move toward the future and welcome digital transformation for faster, better public service.

For the 3rd quarter issue of the CS Reporter, we put the spotlight on CSC *Pagasa* recipients conferred with the award a decade ago. The CSC *Pagasa* is given for outstanding work performance and/or exceptional or extraordinary contributions (may be a suggestion, innovation, invention or superior accomplishment) of individual or group, resulting from an idea or performance that had contributed to the performance of an office, agency or department.

We dub these awardees as "early adopters". According to American communication theorist and sociologist Everett M. Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations, early adopters are the first customers to adopt a new product or technology before the majority of the population does.

These awardees who pioneered digital transformation in their respective agencies may be referred to as lighthouse innovators

because they are the beacon of light for the rest of the bureaucracy to follow to mainstream digital services in government offices.

The first one is Machine Operator III Randy D. Canlas of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

Not the partial hearing impairment or the lack of degree in software programming can deter Randy D. Canlas from serving as an inspiration to his co-workers at the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) where he works as a Printing Machine Operator III.

With a Salary Grade of 9, Randy could very well confine himself to his regular tasks of reproducing documents or sending them thru fax or doing other sundry office work, after all, these are his regular functions and doing them well in the span of eight hours is all that the office requires of him. Accomplishing these tasks creditably will already earn him an "S" or a Satisfactory on his performance evaluation.

But a rating of "S" is not acceptable for Randy as it is second nature to him to step up to the plate and volunteer his services whenever and wherever they are needed.

At the Auxiliary Service Division of the SBMA's Office Services Department (OSD) where he is assigned, Randy gladly fills up the slack for his co-workers when they are on leave or otherwise, occupied with other assignments. He is sometimes the receptionist, secretary, encoder, driver or messenger—name it, and he willingly does it.

But his biggest contribution to the organization is in sharing his acumen in the field of Information Technology. It should be pointed out though that Randy is not involve in SBMA's Management Information System, however, armed with an acumen in programming and the desire to improve systems and procedures, he developed numerous computer programs which have facilitated SBMA operations.

It started in 2003 when he observed the office's difficulty of organizing and tracking records and correspondences, which have been steadily accumulating and taking up lots of space. Randy then asked his supervisor if he can try and come up with a software program that can solve the problem. After a few months, the Office Document Tracking System (ODTS) was introduced in his division. ODTS is a window-based application software that allows users to access, retrieve and store data through point and click capability.

By 2004, ODTS became fully operational and other departments within the SBMA requested that the system be installed in their work stations namely, the Office of the Chairman and the Office of the Administrator and CEO.

Aside from the ODTS, Randy has consequently developed other software programs to help in the monitoring of businesses accredited by SBMA, automation of the business registration system and the vehicle entry and exit management. These programs generated SBMA an estimated P3.8million in savings. He likewise volunteered his services in developing the agency's website which helped immensely in the maintenance of local and foreign investments in Subic and the promotion of economic and social development in Central Luzon. The programs developed by Randy are considered "one-time expense" for SBMA as Randy also takes care of its maintenance and upgrade which has saved the agency an additional P1.2 million.

Aside from developing software programs, Randy also gives free Aikido Training, not just for SBMA employees, but for their dependents as well and for Subic Freeport workers.

Truly, the contributions made by Randy are beyond satisfactory, and should be rated with an "S"—for superb.



Randy D. Canlas
Machine Operator III
Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority

Meanwhile, Senior Economic Development Specialist Arnel G. Palabay of the National Economic and Development Authority in Region 1 declined the lure of higher pay and lucrative benefits offered by a prestigious computer university in La Union. This civil servant chose to stay in public service and eventually prove, in his own way that the government is not wanting in men who exemplify integrity and excellence.

Palabay as a very dedicated worker is consistent in delivering whatever is expected of him. It was of no surprise to his superiors and colleagues that he was able to develop computer programs that enabled the NEDA Regional Office 1 to enhance the delivery of service to their clients.

Arnel initiated the development, installation and deployment of e-systems for NEDA such as the e-library, supply inventory system, online report generation of NEDA's Management Team, online query system of major development indicators, development and management of the National Economic Research and Business Assistance Center (NERBAC), and the Ilocos Region Information Sharing Network—all of which are instrumental in the achievement of productivity and quality performance in the Ilocos region.

But his most notable contribution to the organization was the development of the electronic Daily Time Record System or the eDTR which paved the way for the automation of the computation of personnel information. With the system, updating data on available leave of absence, number or recorded tardiness/undertime on a daily basis is now a breeze.

The automation of employee records also led to the electronic payroll system that ensures accurate information on salary and deductions that include monthly amortization for loans and the terms of payment. After the obligation of the employee is completed, the system automatically deletes the record of the loan so as to prevent over payment. For the installation, deployment and continued upgrading and customization of the eSystems, NEDA Region 1 was able to generate savings of almost half a million pesos.

Arnel is also a recipient of NEDA's Humility and Patience Award for exhibiting humility and patience in the delivery of his duties and responsibilities; staying calm and maintaining a normal tone of voice in expressing his own ideas and suggestions.

He advises fellow state workers to always be proud of their work. "Things can indeed

get tough in public service. But instead of languishing, of using these difficulties as excuses for performing below par, we can transform these setbacks into opportunities for better serving our countrymen. We have to keep in mind though that the true mark of a public servant is that of placing the country's interest above one's own."

Finally, 2011 CSC *Pagasa* recipient, Electronics and Communications Equipment Technician II Dionisio B. Cagampang of the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office No. 10.

For someone who never had formal training in information technology, Cagampang has surely made impressive steps in making himself a competent IT staff.

Back in the 90s, Cagampang was a radio operator at the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office No. 10. He specialized in radio-based communications which was vital to networking among DA field units. In the wake of technological revolution, Cagampang "upgraded" himself and discovered the benefits of using technology in doing inventories to improve administrative services. A self-taught IT practitioner, he banked on his initiative and resourcefulness in creating a computer-based inventory system dubbed PINSYS which streamlined and fast-tracked the process of doing inventory reports at his office. The system features one-click generation of accurate reports by specific categories, which made it very easy for the DA to comply with the requirements of the Commission on Audit, Department of Budget and Management and Department of Finance.

Cagampang did not stop in revolutionizing only one system. He went on to design and develop several others, including the Computerized Project Procurement Management Plan (e-ProcSys), Agency Annual Procurement Plan (APP), Computerized Records Archives System (CRAS), Document Tracking System, and his current pet project, the Agribusiness, Fisheries and Marketing Information System or AFMIS 10, which is poised to be the lead information database of commodities for use of farmers and consumers alike.

His programs contributed to the efficiency and accuracy of transactions inside and outside the office, and generated savings for the DA. What was once a tedious and long process was cut into a simple and fast task. Cagampang successfully extended his services as a radio operator to an IT consultant and systems developer, and was able to create computer programs directly helping projects DA offices and its stakeholders.



Arnel G. Palabay
Senior Economic Development Specialist
National Economic and Development Authority
Region 1



Dionisio B. Cagampang
Electronics and Communications Equipment Technician II
Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office No. 10

LIVE Lunchat with CSC

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) airs a monthly Facebook Live program entitled "LunChat with CSC" which features CSC programs, policies, services, and activities relevant to civil servants.

Below are the episodes aired from July to September 2020. Stay tuned for the next episodes on our Facebook Page (facebook.com/civilservicegovph) and YouTube channel (youtube.com/cscphmedia).

July

What's new on appointments and other HR actions during COVID-19

Watch Now!

Watch this video for a discussion on the Interim Guidelines on Appointments on Human Resource Actions for the Period of State of Calamity due to COVID-19 Pandemic (CSC MC No. 14, s. 2020). Guest: CSC Human Resource Policies and Standards Office Director IV Rodolfo "Rudy" Encajonado

August

How to apply your leave credits for absences due to quarantine or COVID-19 treatment

Watch Now!

Paano nga ba ang application of leave credits kaugnay ng mandatory quarantine at COVID-19 treatment? Watch this episode for a discussion on the Revised Interim Guidelines on the Use of Leave Credits for Absences Due to Quarantine and/or Treatment Relative to COVID-19 (CSC MC No. 8, s. 2020). Guest: CSC Human Resource Policies and Standards Office Director IV Rodolfo "Rudy" Encajonado

September

Thanksgiving episode for the 120th PHILIPPINE CIVIL SERVICE ANNIVERSARY

Watch Now!

This episode is dedicated to thank all civil servants, partners/sponsors, and the people who made the 120th Philippine Civil Service Anniversary (PCSA) a huge success. Guests: CSC Chairperson Alicia dela Rosa-Bala, Assistant Commissioner Ariel Ronquillo (PCSA Steering Committee Chair), Civil Service Institute Director III Lucina Flor Ramos, and CSC Human Resource Relations Office Director IV Cecilia dela Fuente

LINGKOD BAYAN DIARIES

AN ANTHOLOGY OF CIVIL SERVANTS' STORIES

Lingkod Bayan Diaries captures civil servants' stories through short videos.

Be inspired by diverse narratives on why people join the public service, what they love about their job, and the countless ways they contribute to build a better society.

You might be the next featured civil servant in Lingkod Bayan Diaries! Tell us your story by sending an email to csc.pmr@gmail.com.

LINGKOD BAYAN DIARIES featuring **IT Group of CSC Regional Office V**



Improving the Quality of Life and Public Service Through IT Innovations amid COVID-19



Watch Now!

bit.ly/LBDdesero5

Improving the Quality of Life and Public Service Through IT Innovations amid COVID-19

How does this IT Group keep their optimism and drive amid this seemingly paralyzing pandemic? What motivates them to innovate? Why did they choose public service?

Watch this episode of Lingkod Bayan Diaries featuring the IT Group of Civil Service Commission Region V. Get to know these guys and be inspired by their story. More so, get tips from them on what online tools are available to enable employees to work remotely. Learn about AnyDesk, Virtual Public Assistance and Complaints Desk, and more.

LINGKOD BAYAN DIARIES

AN ANTHOLOGY OF CIVIL SERVANTS' STORIES

Featuring: **Alvin F. Macalintal**
Master Teacher II, Fortunato Perez High School
Department of Education-Division of Oriental Mindoro



Watch Now!

bit.ly/LBDAlvinMacalintal

Caring for the Indigenous Community Through Education

How did Tchr. Alvin encourage indigenous students in Mindoro to go to school and learn? What does it take to be like him? Watch this Lingkod Bayan Diaries episode and be inspired by Tchr. Alvin's story.

Alvin Macalintal is a Dangal ng Bayan awardee cited for his zealous commitment in advancing inclusive literacy by bringing education closer to indigenous people in the remote communities of Concepcion, Victoria Bugtong na Tuog and Grandvida in Oriental Mindoro.



HEALTH and WELLNESS

This section encourages readers to look after themselves physically, mentally, spiritually, and yes, financially too. Get insightful tips and advice in prioritizing your health and wellness at work.

Work under alternative work arrangements:

How communication can sustain employee engagement and wellbeing



Image from Freepik

Before the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic happened, office communication is commonplace but is essential in ensuring that information and work instructions are disseminated to all employees. Effective communication remains one of the factors that contribute to organizational success. We were afforded to do face-to-face interactions with our colleagues, whether scheduled or impromptu, due to our proximity with each other in our workplace.

Now that alternative work arrangements are implemented in government agencies to prevent the spread of virus, it completely changed our work routines. We, government workers, were highly affected by this sudden shift as we were not used to the remote work setup. We were forced to make significant adjustments to continue delivering our tasks while outside the office premises. This new situation has highlighted the central role that communication plays in ensuring continued collaboration among leaders and employees.

But as we know, communication is entirely different when we are all in the office seated next to each other compared to working from home alone with only the computer in front of us. So, how can we effectively communicate while under alternative work arrangements? And how does communication sustain employee engagement and well-being? Let's

learn four tips we can use to ensure that we communicate virtually in a right and positive way during this time of pandemic:

Create virtual communication protocols

Since we usually rely on face-to-face interaction or phone calls to reach our colleagues in the office, it had been challenging when suddenly almost everyone was forced to work from home (WFH). The SOP on communication has changed. However, we should remember that the flow of communication should not be disrupted just because some employees are in a WFH setup and some are designated as skeleton workforce. When our communication lines are broken, we won't function properly since coordination is vital to our productivity. Thus, there is a need to revisit your organization's communication protocols to include virtual communication guidelines.

Having updated communication protocols will serve as everyone's guide to what, who, when, where, why, and how to communicate when alternative work arrangements are in place. For example, it is important that employees have all the means to contact colleagues for specific concerns other than email. Thus, it might help to create an online contact database of all departments or divisions within your agency, including focal persons and contact details, for faster coordination.

While the protocols are for everyone to follow, it is still essential to consider your employees' communication preferences and needed technical assistance. As we all know, not all are adept in using digital communication applications, especially older employees considered as digital immigrants. Thus, we need to ask them which tools they are comfortable using but at the same time empower and teach them to understand and effectively use the applications required.

Use the right virtual communication tools

Speaking of digital applications, choosing the right communication tools for effective virtual coordination among staff is crucial. The agreed tools should be specified in your virtual communication protocol. Apart from the regular email correspondence, there are several online channels we can use when working offsite. Instant messaging applications such as MS Teams, Slack, Viber, and Facebook Messenger can be effective for quick collaborations within teams. It is the fastest way to reach out to our colleagues when we have questions, need assistance, or even when we have a personal thing to share. Instant messaging apps are somehow the alternative to those moments in the office when we can just quickly turn around to talk to our colleague or walk into our boss' room. This platform makes employees feel connected and gives a sense of comfort knowing that their team is virtually there, just one message away every working day.

Video conferencing apps like Zoom, Google Meet, and MS Teams are ideal for longer meetings regarding important matters. Leaders use this platform to discuss business strategies, brainstorm, discuss tasks, mentor and coach, and train. It can also be a way to check-in with our team. Some are also using this for teambuilding or activities geared toward health and wellness among employees. The past months have shown that video conferencing apps have temporarily replaced the physical gatherings we conduct in the office.

While virtual comm channels have their benefits, there are also perceived disadvantages. One is information overload—too many messages flooding our chat groups, too many emails in our inbox, and too many virtual meetings. These circumstances can negatively affect work productivity; thus, leaders have to find a balance to avoid communication fatigue among their staff. Simple ways to prevent this fatigue include creating usage rules for instant messaging apps such as restricting staff to send messages beyond work hours. Setting a fixed schedule for team huddles is also necessary to avoid impromptu meetings unless urgent, giving employees ample time to prepare. Leaders may also set core hours to ensure the team's availability.

Establish regular touch-base sessions

As social beings, people are programmed to communicate every day. For us employees, the office has been an avenue for social interactions since we spend a third of our day here. However, this was halted when we were told not to go to the office due to the spread of COVID-19. Since the opportunity to physically communicate with our colleagues

was denied from us, we may feel isolated or disconnected from our team. To sustain consistency in our work life, it is crucial to continue to do a regular, if not daily, check-ins with our teams virtually. Quick huddles first thing in the morning or before the day ends will help as it encourages continuous engagement and coordination among team members. Consistent communication is also a way to reduce fear and uncertainty during this pandemic. It allows leaders to be transparent while ensuring deliverables are still prioritized, issues are raised and solved, and employees continue to share accountability.

Beside work-related conversations, it is vital to do catch-up sessions with your team to talk about their current situation and mental health. These sessions serve as a breather now and then, just like what we do during lunch or coffee breaks in our workplace.

Communicate in a clear, detailed, and empathic manner

Communicating online versus face-to-face is totally different. We cannot see facial expressions and body language in emails and chats. Since we are now mostly relying on

the written correspondence to communicate with our team or employees, we need to be more specific and detailed in explaining priorities, deliverables, or concerns to avoid misinterpretation and confusion. If instructions are still somewhat unclear, it is okay to follow-up and ask for clarification or guidance. Apart from clarity, we also have to be conscious of our tone when we write. We have to practice empathic communication—conveying respect, care, and warmth through the words we transmit to our colleagues. This is especially important during this pandemic when we all struggle to adapt to the new normal and fight for our mental health. When this type of communication is achieved, it will contribute to enhancing employee well-being.

This pandemic has truly intensified the need for stronger communication among us to continue delivering quality public service to our stakeholders while exercising alternative work arrangements. It is still uncertain when we will all go back to our offices, thus we should adopt and use virtual communication tools and strategies to our advantage. We hope these communication tips can help sustain employee work productivity and ensure well-being by being connected, even if virtually.

Image from Freepik



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HEALTH and WELLNESS

Connecting with colleagues during the COVID-19 pandemic

We were never prepared to face this kind of pandemic. Our daily routines, be it personal or professional, were disrupted. The implementation of alternative work arrangements has caused many employees to feel isolated, disconnected, or left alone in the dark. This whole situation has taken a toll on workers' well-being. To address this, webinars about mental health have been offered to government workers. There are also psychological consultations over the phone or online. While these are ways to mitigate mental health issues, we, in the workplace, can also help and support each other as colleagues to stay mentally healthy while working and, at the same time, fighting this pandemic. Here are some of the ways we can do virtually:

Personal Check-in

Apart from the usual work meeting we do, it is crucial that we also conduct regular sessions, be it group or one-on-one, to understand and discuss our colleagues' concerns. A daily simple chat or text can also help. These activities aim to sustain connectedness among colleagues despite not seeing each other at work. With these check-ins, we can open up about our personal circumstances. We can take turns in answering questions such as, "how are you coping?", "what is the setup in your household?", "what are the problems you encounter from the continued quarantine and alternative work arrangements?", and "how can we best support you?" It is also important that we ask our coworkers about the different emotions they feel about all of this and validate them. Take note that our levels of struggle may vary but what's important is that we listen,

understand, empathize, and support each other. We need to tell each other that it is perfectly okay not to be okay during this time.

Exercises

Teams can also conduct physical and mental activities. Online workout sessions such as dance, yoga, and meditation, not only help us be physically fit but reduce stress and produce positive emotions. We can also do mental exercises to provide clarity and help us deal with our fears and concerns. A good mental exercise made by Harvard Business Review can help teams overcome the trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic by storytelling or sharing personal experiences. You may read it here: <https://hbr.org/2020/09/an-exercise-to-help-your-team-overcome-the-trauma-of-the-pandemic>.



Photo from Canva

Happy hour

Activities that can produce a sense of normalcy in this challenging period can also ease the tension and anxiety everyone feels. Playing fun virtual games such as online trivia, bingo, word puzzles, or anything that lightens the mood is encouraged. Teams may do this in the last hour of any workday as a cap-off activity. Colleagues can also arrange a virtual Friday night with each other with a favorite drink or food to make casual conversations.

Support mechanisms

Aside from moral support, we can share personal strategies/ideas that help alleviate negative emotions during this period, such as newly-formed good habits, self-care routines, and other helpful activities and resources. We can create a group chat or other online platform exclusive for non work-related conversations and sharing. At work, we can extend support by helping those coworkers who have difficulty learning new ICT applications. Leaders can also extend deadlines and modify workload when members struggle in juggling home and work responsibilities. We should also be patient and understanding when employees' work productivity is lower than usual. Bottomline, let's understand each other's needs and help in our little way.

These are just some of the ways to connect with your team during this period of uncertainty. If we think about it, during the pre-pandemic days, even though we are all present in the office, we had limited interactions with our colleagues on a personal level. We rarely talk about our personal situations as majority of the time we are swamped with work. We may even feel distant to them and just concentrate on finishing our tasks so that we can get home early to spend time with our families. But due to the alternative work arrangements, the tables have been turned. We are now spending more physical time with our family and less with our colleagues. This situation made us realize how important it is to stay connected with our teams and that we need to continue to nurture our relationship with them as they can help us with our overall well-being. If there is something positive that this COVID-19 situation has done to us, it allowed us to rebuild our relationships with our colleagues in a deeper and more personal level. We hope that when this pandemic is over, we will continue to do these activities with our team.



Photo from Canva



Photo from Canva

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HEALTH and WELLNESS

Mindfulness Wellness Session



CSC RO V employees participate in a mindfulness session with Dr. Gayle Abonal-Gomez.



Understanding the effects of stress and learning how to let go when all of these become out of control is necessary for one's well-being. This is according to Dr. Gayle Abonal-Gomez, a registered psychologist and professor at the Ateneo De Naga University during her wellness session with the Civil Service Commission Regional Office V personnel on 5 August 2020. The session was titled "Mindfulness in Your Everyday Life," an activity that was initiated by the CSC RO V Human Resource Division.

The Learning Service Provider defined mindfulness as being more in touch and attentive with the self which can be achieved by means of being aware and focused on breathing and the body. Through mindfulness, one can remain concentrated and calm no matter how taxing the situation is, she added.

Dr. Abonal-Gomez led a short relaxation exercise, an activity that aims to weed out tension and manage stress. Afterwards, the attendees were given a chance to share their experiences and thoughts while doing the exercise. She also explained the possible reasons for their feelings while doing the exercise.

Mindfulness is a technique in managing stress which can later on be developed as part of one's skill. Dr. Abonal-Gomez also said that this can help in combatting anxieties and relaxing the muscles in the body. This technique leads to awareness and understanding of existing tension, and being able to release the tension because it brings no good.

The mindfulness wellness session which was a virtual type of learning ran for almost an hour. It served as a breather for the CSC RO V employees especially in this trying time.

SUPPORT FOR RETURNING SCHOLARS
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Number : 2000778
Promulgated : 3 SEP 2020

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 16 Item 10 of Executive Order 292, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) shall provide leadership and assistance in the development and retention of qualified and efficient workforce in the Civil Service; formulate standards for training and staff development; administer service-wide scholarship programs; develop training literature and materials; coordinate and integrate all training activities and evaluate training programs;

WHEREAS, CSC issued **Memorandum Circular No. 44 s. 1992 entitled Guidelines and Operating Procedures in the Administration of the Scholarship Program for Government which established the Scholarship Program for Government** and provided for its administration to ensure uniform interpretation of policies pertaining to service-wide scholarship programs both local and foreign. **Specifically, item 12 which indicates among others, that the Agency shall shoulder the necessary expenses required by the grantee for the duration of the program.**

WHEREAS, the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases issued **Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines** (with Amendments as of 25 June 2020) due to COVID 19 pandemic;

WHEREAS, there are government foreign and local scholars who are due to return to our country and/or their local residences and places of assignment this year upon completion of their scholarship studies/grants. These returning scholars shall be subjected under IATF Omnibus Guidelines specifically **Section 7- Guidelines for Interzonal Movement** which permits movement of people, goods and services across areas under different community quarantine. Among others, it prescribes that returning non-OFWs (including returning scholars) who have been issued a DOH or LGU certificate of completion of **fourteen (14)-day facility-based quarantine, those who may be required to undergo a mandatory fourteen (14)-day home quarantine**, or those who are issued with travel authority **upon testing negative for COVID-19**, whichever is earlier, shall be granted unhampered transit across zones enroute to their final destination in the Philippines

WHEREAS, CSC likewise issued **Memorandum Circular No. 08 s. 2020 entitled Revised Interim Guidelines on the Use of Leave Credits for Absences Due to Quarantine and/or Treatment Relative to COVID-19 specifically item 3.4.1 of said Circular** which indicates that "Absence from work during the fourteen (14) calendar days required quarantine period and treatment for COVID-19, shall be considered as excused absence (required quarantine leave and/or COVID-19 treatment leave).

WHEREFORE, the Commission hereby **RESOLVES** that all necessary expenses related to post travel quarantine procedures of returning foreign and local scholars will be charged to their respective Agency fund as prescribed under **MC 44 s. 1992**, and that absence from work during the 14 calendar days required quarantine period and treatment for COVID-19 shall be considered as excused absence as prescribed under **MC 08 s. 2020**, subject to COA rules and accounting procedures.
Quezon City.

(Sgd.) **ALICIA dela ROSA-BALA**
Chairperson

(Sgd.) **ATTY. AILEEN LOURDES A. LIZADA**
Commissioner

VACANT
Commissioner

Attested by:

(Sgd.) **DOLORES B. BONIFACIO**
Director IV
Commission Secretariat and Liaison Office

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c.

Imposition of additional costs not reflected in the Citizen's Charter;

d.

Failure to give applicant or requesting party a written notice on the disapproval of an application or request;

e.

Failure to render government services within the prescribed processing time on any application and/or request without due cause;

f.

Failure to attend to applicants or requesting parties who are within the premises of the office or agency concerned prior to the end of official working hours and during lunch break;

g.

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