HRD And Globalization: Improving Competencies at the Local Government Level

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Abstract

The globalization process has affected to a large extent the way of life of the individual citizens and the communities. This, in turn, has generated new institutional challenges for local institutions and has given rise to a set of complex needs and problems from the communities. As a local institution considered to be the closest to the community residents, local government has to respond to such needs and challenges to be able to serve well their interests and concerns. In responding to such challenges, local government’s role has to go beyond being a service provider. It has to be an enabler by providing the right kind of environment where the community will grow and flourish into a vibrant economic and social unit.

The changing role of local government in the governance of communities has highlighted strongly the need to develop human resources at the local level to cope with the enabling functions of the local government. In relating directly with the community, the local government personnel must have the necessary skills and knowledge to better serve the residents’ needs and concerns. With the changing concept of local governance, the local government personnel should be qualified and highly trained for their enabling or facilitative functions. A basic question that is raised is, do they have the competence to perform the enabling functions of local government?

Focusing on the case of the Philippines, this paper will attempt to respond to the above concern. It will examine the needs, issues and problems of HRD in relation to the changing concept of local governance in the context of globalization. It will also look into the competencies of local government personnel vis-à-vis their expected new roles or functions in facilitating local or community development. The challenges for local government to develop its human resources to enable it to exercise more effectively its enabling role will be discussed. Some policy implications will be raised in the paper as well as some measures will be presented to improve competencies at the local level.
Introduction

The globalization process has affected to a large extent the way of life of the individual citizens and the communities. The advent of free trade and liberalization, coupled with new technologies in information and communication have revolutionized the interactions and interfacing of various sectors in the communities. These, in turn, have generated new institutional challenges for local institutions and have given rise to a set of complex needs and problems from the communities. As a local institution considered to be the closest to the community residents, local government has to respond to such needs and challenges to be able to serve well their interests and concerns. It is in this context that the role and functions of the local government are given focus. To meet such challenges, local government’s role has to go beyond being a service provider. It has to be an enabler by providing the right kind of environment for the community to grow and flourish into a vibrant economic and social unit.

The changing role of local government in the governance of communities has highlighted strongly the need to develop human resources at the local level to cope with the enabling functions of the local government. In relating directly with the community, the local government personnel must have the necessary skills and knowledge to better serve the residents’ needs and concerns. With the changing concept of local governance, the local government personnel should be qualified and highly trained for their enabling or facilitative functions. A basic question that is raised is, do they have the competence to perform the enabling functions of local government?

Focusing on the case of the Philippines, this paper tries to respond to the above concern. It is divided into four parts. The first section provides an overview of the structure and functions of local governments in the Philippines. It also discusses some significant powers and authority given them by the Local Government Code, an enabling law passed by Congress in 1991. The second part expounds on the enabling functions of local government using the enabling models of local government authority. It goes on to discuss the enabling role of the Philippine local government in the context of these models. The third section presents the human resource competencies at the local level. It outlines the required competencies vis-à-vis the enabling functions of local government and identifies the gaps between the existing and the needed competencies for the exercise of such functions. The issues, problems and concerns in developing human resource competencies are also tackled in this part. Drawing from the discussions in the first three sections, the last portion focuses on the challenges faced by the national and local governments in improving human resource competencies at the local level and presents some measures to respond to such development challenges.

The Structure and Functions of Local Governments in the Philippines:

An Overview

Local governments in the Philippines are political subdivisions of the state. Under a unitary system of government, they are creations of the national government via legislation. Thus, the national government can create, merge and abolish them. It can also define and delimit the powers to be exercised by local governments and can determine the powers to be shared by the central and sub-national levels (Tapales and Cabo, 1998).
As head of state, the President exercises general supervision over local governments. Under Section 25 of the Local Government Code of 1991, the President “shall exercise supervisory authority directly over provinces, highly urbanized cities, and independent component cities; through the province with respect to component cities and municipalities; and through the city and municipality with respect to barangays”.

**Tiers of Local Government**

There are four tiers or levels of local government in the Philippines: the province, city, municipality, and barangay (village). The province which is composed of several municipalities and component cities is generally the largest unit. It performs developmental and coordinative functions for the local government units under its supervision. Meanwhile, the city and municipality are the service provider units. They provide basic services to the community residents such as water, health, social welfare, garbage collection and disposal, and infrastructure. The barangay, which is the smallest unit in terms of size, is directly under the supervision of the city or municipality. It provides support services to the city or municipality such as maintenance of barangay health center, day care center, farm to market roads, and distribution of planting materials. Although it provides minimal services to the community residents, this unit plays an important role in the crystallization of viewpoints, issues and concerns of the community. It provides the venue for the discussion of such issues and concerns being the closest local unit to the villagers.

The city is relatively more urban in character than the municipality. It has larger population and higher population density; more and intense commercial or economic activities; and greater urban problems such as lack of housing units, water shortage or insufficient water services, lack of health facilities, and slums and informal settlers. Because of these problems, the city performs more urban functions than the municipality. It can generate more resources and income from its taxing powers than the municipality due to its large tax bases.

Cities in the country are categorized into three: component, independent component, and highly urbanized. The component city is geographically part of and is under the administrative supervision of the province. Although the independent component city is within the territorial boundary of the province, it is not under its administrative supervision. The highly urbanized city is also administratively independent of the province. It is classified as such if it meets the income and population criteria set forth by the Local Government Code.

**Local Government Officials**

There are two categories of local government officials: the elective and the appointive. The elective officials are elected directly by the voters of the local area while the appointive officials are appointed by the local chief executive. Their appointments are based on civil service rules and regulations. Thus, they belong to the local civil service and have security of tenure.

Each local government unit has a set of executive and legislative officials who are elected for a term of three years. At the provincial level, the elected officials are: the governor, vice-governor and members of the legislative council (Sangguniang
Panlalawigan). At the municipal and city levels, the mayor, vice-mayor and the members of the legislative council (Sangguniang Bayan and Sangguniang Panlunsod, respectively) are the elected officials.

There are ex-officio members of the legislative council. These are: the local presidents of the league of barangays (village governments), the presidents of the local federation of the youth council (Sangguniang Kabataan), and the presidents of the federation of the council members (Sangguniang members). In addition to these regular members, there are three sectoral representatives as provided for in the Local Government Code: one from the women sector, one worker from the industrial or agricultural sector, and one from the urban poor, disabled or indigenous groups.

With respect to the appointive officials, the province has this set of officials: the Administrator, Treasurer, Assessor, Budget Officer, Accountant, Planning and Development Officer, Social Welfare and Development Officer, Agriculturist, Engineer, Legal Officer, Civil Registrar, Health Officer, Information Officer, Environment and Natural Resources Officer, Cooperatives Officer, Population Officer, Veterinarian, General Services Officer, and Secretary to the Sanggunian. As stipulated in the Code, the positions of the Environment Officer, Population Officer, Veterinarian, and General Services Officer are not required to be filled by the provincial government; they are optional positions. Similar positions are found at the city and municipal levels with more optional officer positions at the municipality.

**Powers and Functions**

The Local Government Code of 1991 altered the power sharing between the national government and the local governments. It devolved more powers and authority to the local governments such as taxing powers, appointment of local officials, regulatory powers, and basic services and functions.

Prior to the passage of the Code, services and functions relative to agriculture, health, social services, public works and highways, and environmental management and protection were the responsibilities of the national government. The Code enabled each level of local government to implement such services and functions. The municipality is responsible for the implementation of agriculture and fishery related extension and on site research services and facilities; primary health care and access to secondary and tertiary services, purchase of medicines and supplies; infrastructure facilities such as roads and bridges; programs on child and youth welfare, nutrition and family planning; and community-based forestry projects.

The province takes charge of the following services and functions: prevention and control of animal and plant pest and diseases; assistance in the organization of farmers’ and fishermen’s cooperatives; relief operations and population development services; construction and maintenance of infrastructure facilities funded out of provincial funds; enforcement of forestry laws limited to community-based forestry projects, pollution and control law, small-scale mining law, and other laws on the protection of the environment.

The city performs all the above services and functions which both the municipality and province are responsible for. In addition, it provides adequate communication facilities and support for education, police and fire services and facilities. Meanwhile, the barangay, the smallest unit of local government, provides general support services to agriculture, health
and infrastructure facilities. However, it is not responsible for the construction of such facilities.

The devolution of basic services and functions to the local governments carried with it the transfer of field personnel who were national government employees before the implementation of the Code.

The Code has empowered the local chief executives (governors and mayors) to appoint local officials who are paid wholly or fully from local funds such as the heads of offices and departments. Before the passage of the Code, the key finance officers such as the treasurer, budget officer and assessor were appointees of the national government. However, the treasurer remains to be a national appointee despite the fact that his/her salary is drawn from local funds.

Through the Code, the local governments have been given more powers to impose taxes, fees and levies. Tax rates were increased and their share from the proceeds of the collection of nationally imposed taxes were also increased.

Regulatory powers were also devolved to the local governments such as the power to reclassify agricultural lands, enforce environmental laws and the Building Code, process and approve subdivision plans, inspect food products, and regulate the operation of tricycles (a local transport similar to a rickshaw but it is motorized).

People participation has been broadened by the Code. Representatives of NGOs, POs, and the private sector sit in the local governing bodies such as the local development council, the local school board and the local health board.

The Enabling Role and Functions of Local Government

Local governance emphasizes the role of three stakeholders in the process of governing communities: the local government, NGOs or civil society, and the private sector. This implies that the community residents articulate their needs and concerns not only to the local government but also to the civil society groups and to the private organizations. As a local institution with resources, local government is placed in a focal point of interrelationships between and among the voluntary groups, civil society, and the business sector. As such, it has to mediate and resolve community conflicts and competition (Legaspi, 2001). In doing so, it has to be an enabler to facilitate the resolution and mediation of conflicts and competition. Moreover, it has to put up an enabling environment whereby the various sectors or stakeholders can interact more actively and can take a more proactive role in promoting the interests of the whole community.

It is in this context that the enabling functions of the local government are given emphasis. Hollis, Ham and Hambler (1992) define enabling as “development of different and more flexible ways of operating which are both more suited to the many and varied demands now placed on local government and most effective in meeting the needs of local communities”. This definition implies that the local government can develop ways of doing things to respond to the demands of local communities. It can be an enabler if it goes beyond the traditional role of direct service provider; if it lets the market forces work in the delivery of services; if it contracts out services to some professional groups for more efficient delivery
of services; and if it provides the needed infrastructure and policy environment for local enterprises to grow and develop.

**Enabling Authority Models**

There are four models of enabling authority according to Leach, Stewart and Walsh (1994): the traditional bureaucratic authority, residual enabling authority, market-oriented enabling authority, and community-oriented enabling authority.

The traditional bureaucratic authority largely emphasizes the role of local government as direct service provider. It focuses on the statutory duties and responsibilities of the local government. Although representative democracy works in this kind of enabling authority, it does not give due importance to participatory democracy where the citizens are involved in the process of formulating policies and in the implementation of programs and projects in the local community. The residual enabling authority on the other, provides a limited set of services which can not be delivered by the private sector or the market. This kind of authority gives importance to the role of the market in the provision of services. It considers the market mechanism as the most “efficient and effective” in the delivery of services.

The market-oriented enabling authority also emphasizes the role of the market in service delivery. However, this authority goes beyond service provision. It takes the primary role in developing the local economy by leading the planning and coordination of all the economic activities in the community. It provides the necessary policy and infrastructure framework for the economic development of the community. Thus, it gives primary concern to the development of networks and linkages with the private sector where it enters into contracts and agreements for the planning and development of the local economy. The regulation of such activities is also stressed by the local authority.

Meanwhile, the community-oriented enabling authority focuses on the community both as a collective and as individuals. Taking the view that the citizen should participate in the decision-making processes, the enabling authority provides the participative mechanisms at the community level. It values participatory democracy and community accountability. The authority’s relationship with the community gives importance to its role on networking where it can exert its influence on the citizenry. (Leach, et al, 1994).

Given the above models of enabling authority, under what model would Philippine local governments fall? Apparently, the local governments in the Philippines are seen to be more of service providers having a strong public sector orientation. This was especially so before the enactment of the Local Government Code in 1991. Their role as service providers were limited by weak powers and authority in terms of finances and local decision processes (Legaspi, 2001). However, with the passage of the Code, they were given more powers and authority to enable them not only to perform their role as service delivery mechanisms but also to provide an enabling environment for the development of the local community. In this regard, a number of local governments are seen to be moving towards the direction of market and community enabling authority. This is evidenced by the number of national awards given them in recognition of the changes and reforms they have introduced into their organizational structures, systems, policy frameworks and strategies to govern better their respective communities.
The Enabling Functions

With the advent of the globalization process, the enabling functions in the context of the market-oriented and community-oriented enabling authority models are given focus. Under the market-oriented model, the enabling functions pertaining to the local economic concerns are emphasized. These would include among others, the following: strategic local economic planning; preparation of local economic plans to include investment and promotion plans; coordination and negotiation with the private sector in coming up with local economic planning agreements; preparation of contracts with the private sector in privatizing public sector services; putting in place the mechanisms for incentives to business enterprises; and regulating operations of business establishments.

The community-oriented enabling model stresses the view that the local government exists for the community. In this case, functions that enable the development of the community include: provision of mechanisms for negotiation with the various sectors in the community particularly in regard to their participation in the planning and implementation of programs and projects; resolution and mediation of conflicts among the differing views from different groups; provision of assistance to the organization of people’s or community organizations; institution of collaborative mechanisms for more enduring working partnerships with the various sectors in the community; definition of standards of service and the criteria of performance by which the local government would be assessed and evaluated by the community; provision of access mechanisms to the underprivileged and disadvantaged groups; and provision of public information about local services and programs.

To enable the local governments to exercise the above enabling functions, the local government staff or personnel should have the competencies to perform the said functions. Do they have the needed competencies?

HR Competencies at the Local Government Level

Based on the document of the Civil Service Commission on Inventory of Government Personnel, the Philippines had a total of 1,445,498 government personnel in 1999. Of this number, there were 390,561 local government personnel or 27.02 % of the total workforce. Classifying the government workforce into career and non-career, (1) the whole bureaucracy had a total of 1,250,510 career service employees and 194,988 non-career service personnel. The local government sector had 272,345 or 21.78 % career and 118,216 or 60.63 % non-career employees. These figures indicate strongly that this sector continued to employ the biggest non-career personnel. Moreover, the local governments had a big number of casuals or contractual employees at 94,681 or 80.09 % of the total non-career employees at the local level. This further suggests that many of the local government personnel lack the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to perform the enabling functions of local governments.

The Training institutions and Capability-building Programs

Given the above scenario, the task of capability building at the local level becomes a primordial concern. In the Philippines, both national and local governments have the responsibility to develop and upgrade the competencies of the local government personnel. The Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Local Government Academy (LGA) of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) are mandated by law to build HR capabilities at the local level. The CSC either conducts training activities through its regional
offices throughout the country or through its accredited training institutions. Through its regional offices, the CSC has been conducting courses for all state workers which cover the following general areas: supervisory, middle management, clerical or secretarial, technical or professional, values development, employee development, induction, and orientation or reorientation. Based on the 2001 annual report of the CSC, almost half of the total training output of the Commission was on the orientation or reorientation program. To develop positive work attitudes among the state workers, the CSC offered and administered values development programs which included the Alay Sa Bayan (Offering to the Nation) training program.

The CSC has also been touching base with the local government executives through the various Local Government Executive For a. Through this mechanism, the local government executives are updated on the latest civil service laws, rules and regulations and other relevant provisions of the Code.

In order to provide more training programs to the state workers, the CSC has been accrediting training organizations and institutions to assist in the task of capability building. As of CY 2001, 136 training organizations have been accredited. Likewise, trainers for specific courses such as Values Orientation Workshop (VOW) and the Supervisory Development Course (SDC) have been accredited. As of this date, 57 new trainers have been added to the list of the VOW and 13 to the SDC.

With the aim of providing opportunities for civil servants to enhance their skills and competencies through advanced studies, the CSC has launched the Local Scholarship Program (LSP). This is a one-year study grant for those employees interested to pursue master’s degrees on official time. A component of the program is the Bachelor’s Degree Completion for those employees who wish to earn their college diploma. Employees who would like to upgrade their skills and competencies can avail of the Skilled Workers in Government (SWG), another component of the program. As of CY 2001, 3,816 state workers have availed of the LSP program; 377 have taken advantage of the SWG; and 6,079 have finished technical and vocational courses in different institutions.

Complementing the CSC in the delivery of training programs at the local level is the LGA of the DILG. As a training arm of the DILG, the Academy is mandated by law to “coordinate, synchronize, rationalize, and deliver training programs for local governments and the human resource development of the personnel of the local government sector of the Department”. A perusal of the list of capability building activities conducted by the LGA in CY 2000 shows that most of the training activities were centered on skills enhancement for development legislation, revenue mobilization and financial management and analysis, ordinance codification, and participatory process as an approach in comprehensive land use planning.

The LGA has also some special projects such as the Municipal Training Program (MTP) and the Community-Based Resource Management Project (CBRMP) which are geared towards capacitating the local government officials in the performance of their jobs. For instance, under the MTP, the local government officials undergo training to equip them with the needed skills on planning and implementation of infrastructure projects. Under the CBRMP, training workshops are conducted basically on community organizing and participatory rural appraisal. In CY 2000, 2,136 participants from 107 local government units went through the said training workshops.
A regular training program sponsored by the Academy is the Local Administration and Development Program or LADP. This is a 34-year old training program specially designed for local elective officials. Conducted in tandem with the Center for Local and Regional Governance of the National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines, the program is focused on developing and strengthening the managerial and leadership skills of local officials. Part of the curriculum centers on systems improvement, resource mobilization and generation, strategic and development planning, and economic promotion. The program is now on its 46th batch of trainees and has produced about 1,500 graduates.

Embarking on local institution building, the LGA has conducted new programs in collaboration with other institutions, both public and private. One of these programs is oriented towards local economic transformation. In CY 2002, a seminar-workshop on Local Prosperity Promotion was undertaken where a total of 147 local chief executives, municipal planning and development coordinators, barangay captains, and other local officials participated in. The trainees came from four cities. The Department of Trade and Industry partnered with the Academy in this activity.

Similarly, in coordination with the Bureau of Local Government Supervision of the DILG, a training program on streamlining regulatory systems at the local level was conducted by the LGA for local officials. This was attended by officials from 231 local government units. Likewise, the LGA assisted the Department of Tourism in the conduct of Tourism Capability Building seminar workshop. This was designed to strengthen the local tourism councils by equipping the officials with skills in the preparation of local tourism development plan. This activity was participated in by 349 officials from 112 local government units.

The local governments themselves may also provide and conduct training programs for their personnel. They may contract out the conduct of the training to training institutions or organizations; or, they undertake it themselves. Unfortunately, not many of them can afford to provide funds for this activity. What a number of local governments do is to send one or two of their staff to attend training programs offered and conducted by the CSC, LGA, and other training organizations. However, this is not a regular activity on the part of the local governments. Much would depend on the availability of funds for the purpose.

**HR Competencies and the Enabling Functions**

The kind(s) of training programs offered and conducted by the CSC and LGA indicate the kind of competencies many of the local government personnel have. On the part of CSC, it appears that most of its training programs are designed to enhance skills and knowledge of employees to make them more effective in their jobs. These are centered on orientation and reorientation; values development; updating of skills for supervisors, middle managers, clerical force, and technical or professional employees; and personnel development. These imply that the kind of training that they receive would make them more effective service providers. Moreover, it can be noted from the list of conducted training programs that there is lack of specific training programs for the development and enhancement of skills and knowledge of local government employees to enable them to perform their market-oriented enabling functions. These refer to their functions in developing the local economy which include: strategic local economic planning; preparation of local investment and promotion plans; coordination and negotiation with the private sector; and regulation of business.
establishments and enterprises. The same case is true with the skills and knowledge needed to carry out the functions included under the community-oriented enabling model. Seemingly, the CSC training programs are not geared towards the development and enhancement of skills and knowledge of local government employees relative to participatory skills in the planning and implementation of programs and projects; resolution and mediation skills; community organizing; and information dissemination.

Inasmuch as the LGA has been mandated by law to deliver training programs to the local governments, its programs are specifically designed for local governments. The list of programs conducted in CY 2000 indicates the emphasis on skills enhancement for service delivery. However, there are certain programs which deal with skills development and upgrading relative to the enabling functions under the community-oriented model. These refer to the skills on participatory approach to land use planning; community organizing, and participatory rural appraisal. But then, only a few local governments have participated in the workshops on these topics.

In regard to the enabling functions under the market-oriented model, the LGA has attempted to upgrade skills and knowledge on these functions. More recently, it has conducted programs focused on local economic transformation. These stress the skills and knowledge needed to develop the local economy such as those on investment promotion and streamlining regulatory systems for the business sector. Nonetheless, only a small number of local chief executives and municipal planning officers from three cities availed of the training on investment promotion and only 231 local governments partook of the training activity on the streamlining the regulatory systems.

The regular program on LADP for local elective officials also emphasizes some of the enabling skills needed for strategic and development planning and local economic promotion. Again, this program has a very limited reach. So far, it has only produced about 1,500 graduates. Besides, the target trainees are limited to the elective officials particularly the local chief executives. Seldom does the program have local functionaries in attendance.

Issues and Concerns

The above discussion shows the big gap between the existing HR competencies and the needed competencies at the local level for the performance of the enabling functions of the local governments. Training activities for skills and knowledge improvement are oriented more towards strengthening service delivery rather than towards the exercise of the enabling functions under the market and community-oriented models of enabling authority. Although there are training programs directed towards the improvement of enabling competencies, such those conducted by the LGA, there are a number of issues and concerns which have to be addressed to facilitate the movement towards capacitating the local government personnel for enabling functions. These are:

1. **Limited reach of the training programs.** The CSC conducts training through its regional offices. However, the Commission does not only undertake training activities for the local government personnel but for all state workers. Considering the limited number of staff at the regional level (898 to include 81 staff assigned in the Career Development Division of all regional offices) to cater to the local government units with around 1,500 municipalities, 115 cities, and 79 provinces, it would be difficult for the CSC to reach most of the employees in all the local areas. The same case is true with the LGA. There are also regional offices of
the DILG, which could serve as the conduit for the training programs. But the regional offices have priority programs other than the training offered by the LGA. While it’s true that the CSC has accredited training organizations and institutions to supplement their training activities, their total efforts is never enough for such a big population of local government personnel (390,561). As of CY 2001, 136 training institutions have been accredited. This is a small number to be able to respond to the training needs of the local governments.

Meanwhile, the LGA has been accrediting training programs for local governments. A prerequisite, however, is the institutional accreditation of the CSC.

1. **More focus on the training programs for local elective officials.** As reflected from the list of conducted training programs of the LGA, most of the participants are the elective officials such as the mayors, vice-mayors, members of the legislative council, and punong barangays (village chieftains). A few functionaries or key staff or employees participate in the programs. This seems to be a weak spot in the process of building up the capacities of local government personnel for the enabling functions. While it is argued that the role of the local political leadership is significant in the introduction of changes and reforms at the local level, the role of the functionaries or the employees can not be downplayed in the process of transformation. They provide the support to maintain and sustain the efforts towards management of change. It is they who are considered the mainstay in the local governments, considering the fact that the local officials are elected to office every three years.

2. **Lack of financial resources.** This is a major concern most especially among the low-income class of local government units. Due to their limited finances, they can not access the training programs offered and conducted by the CSC and LGA. Although these are government programs, still, the participants have to shell out a minimal amount to cover the expenses for supplies, materials, and food or snacks during the training period. In this regard, some local government units would just send one, at most two, employees to attend the training. In practice, one or two trained employees would not make a big difference in the transformation process.

3. **The need to have regular training programs for the local government sector.** The CSC has been conducting regular training programs for the state workers. However, as stated earlier, the programs cater to all government employees and not to any particular sector in the government bureaucracy. The Commission’s programs do not appear to address the particular need to develop the competencies of the local government personnel for the performance of their enabling functions.

   The LGA, on the other, has programs directed towards improving competencies of the local government personnel. The programs, nonetheless, are not conducted on a regular basis. Some are components of special projects; the longevity of which would depend largely on the completion of the projects. The non-regularity of conducted programs contributes largely to their limited reach. There is one regular program though, the LADP, which is designed for local elective officials, particularly for mayors. This does not also respond to the need for developing and upgrading the enabling competencies of the local functionaries or personnel.
Challenges to Improving HR Competencies at the Local Level

The changing concept of local governance in an emerging global economy brings to the fore the critical role of local governments in the development of local communities. Their role shifts from being service provider to that of an enabler in order to provide an enabling environment for the local communities to grow and prosper.

Concomitant with the enabling functions of the local governments is the need to have HR competencies for the performance of such functions. In the Philippine context, there seems to be a big gap between the existing and the needed competencies for the exercise of the said functions. The big challenge for the government therefore, is to bridge this gap to facilitate the development of local communities. In meeting the challenge, government has to address the above-cited issues and concerns.

First, on the need to shift the emphasis of training programs. As has been pointed out, most of the training programs are designed to upgrade competencies for service delivery and not for the performance of the enabling functions. It behooves the government then to come up with a policy shift on programs along this line.

Second, on the lack of regular training programs designed for developing and improving competencies for the exercise of the enabling functions. It appears imperative for the CSC to develop and conduct a regular training program particularly for the local government personnel. As discussed earlier, the CSC conducts training programs for all state workers. HR competencies at the local level could be further enhanced if the CSC regional offices would undertake specific programs for local government personnel to be done on a regular basis. Likewise, the LGA should be able to conduct more regular training programs specifically for local functionaries and personnel to equip them with the needed skills and knowledge to perform their enabling functions. Presently, most of the training programs of the Academy are attended by the local elective officials.

Third, on the need for an integrated capability building program for all local elective officials and functionaries, focused on the enabling functions. Aside from conducting regular programs, the LGA should undertake an integrated capability building program for both the local elective officials and personnel or functionaries. Each regular program to be undertaken should be within one loop of training programs for improving enabling competencies. This would strengthen not only the competencies of the local personnel but also, would enhance further the value of teamwork between the elective and appointive officials.

Fourth, on the need to allocate funds for capability building programs. One major problem of capacity building efforts at the local level is the lack of financial resources for this purpose. As stated earlier, many of the local government units do not have adequate funds to undertake training programs for their employees; nor, do they have funds to send many of their personnel for further training. Perhaps, the DILG can formulate a policy on the grant of incentives to local governments where they would be encouraged to set aside on a regular basis, a certain amount from their development funds for capability building programs most especially for the development of enabling competencies. In other words, there is a need for a continuing capability building program for every local government unit in the country through a regular allocation of funds from local development funds.
Fifth, on the need to establish a local career service. The lack of a corps of professional workers at the local government level could be traced to the absence of a local career service. Many professionals or technical persons are not attracted to stay put in a local government unit because of the lack of opportunities for professional growth and development. The lack of professionals and technical staff is also an indication of inadequate HR competencies at the local level. Perhaps, the CSC can take a hard look at this problem. The establishment of a local career service by the Commission can respond to the crucial need for developing and improving HR competencies at the local level.

End Note

1. Career service- the entrance of employees is based on merit and fitness, determined by competitive examinations or on highly technical qualifications; non-career – the entrance of employees is based on factors other than the usual test of merit and fitness utilized for the career service. Their tenure is limited to a period specified by law, or is coterminous with that of the appointing authority or is subject to his/her pleasure, or is limited to the duration of a particular project for which purpose employment was made.
References


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