



The DBM Bulletin

The Official Newsletter of the Department of Budget and Management

Merry Christmas



IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 CELEBRATING WHAT MATTERS MOST
- 4 ANOTHER YEAR INTO THE PANDEMIC: ADAPTING AND THRIVING
- 6 ANGAT LOKAL: FOSTERING RECEPTIVE AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES
- 8 'ROSE' FROM THE RANKS
- 10 COMPENSATION COMPENDIUM
- 11 LS NOOK
- 12 NEWS BRIEF

CELEBRATING WHAT MATTERS MOST

BY: REY ANGELO GONZAGA

'Tis the season to be safe, merry, and kind.

Of the many traditions and holidays that we observe throughout the year, Christmas is always the most joyful, memorable, and meaningful. But the COVID-19 pandemic has forced upon us so many adjustments in the way we celebrate holidays, including and indeed most especially Christmas, for the sake of our and our loved ones' safety and protection.

In this time of pandemic, the usual Yuletide festivities that we have been accustomed to have to be considered in a new light – and prepared for differently, much unlike in previous years. COVID-19 has made us realize that perhaps we need to rediscover how to celebrate the holidays in their essence and simplicity.

Certainly, the season in these times provides us with an excellent opportunity to reflect on the more important things in life, including the gift of presence which is more valuable than presents.

But no matter the restrictions and limitations imposed by the pandemic, especially on long and deeply cherished traditions and celebrations, the essence of Christmas remains the same – Christmas even in the time of the pandemic still means spreading hope, peace, joy, and love. It remains an occasion and opportunity to live out charity and goodwill towards everyone, especially those who are less fortunate.

As we celebrate a new kind of Christmas – with virtual Christmas parties and socially-distanced gift-giving – let us relive our old traditions, activities, and celebrations in the DBM during the most wonderful time of the year.

From charitable acts, exciting Christmas parties, memorable contests, Monito-Monita gift exchanges, raffle draws, to random acts of kindness – below are some Christmas stories from the DBM family to keep us all in the Christmas spirit.

Alessandra B. Apuya, DBM RO V Painting the Colors of Christmas

Christmas is a time for exchanging presents, reuniting with friends over good food, and getting merry at parties. But Christmas is also, of course, the season of goodwill, and can be a challenging time for many people, particularly those who are homeless, recently bereaved, lonely, or struggling to make ends meet.

I witnessed this firsthand during what I consider as my most meaningful Christmas experience so far in the DBM. In December 2019, the DBM Regional Office V (DBM Cinco) conducted a gift-giving activity at the DSWD Haven for Women and Girls (Haven), a local center in Ligao City which offers a safe refuge for victims of domestic violence in the region.



One of the memorable highlights of the event for me was the collaborative activity between the Haven residents and the DBM Cinco staff, in which we painted on a blank canvas, using the painting materials we donated to them, to support their income-generating activity – crafting hand-painted canvas bags.

During the activity, I realized that children from a difficult background can be self-contained, less open to others, or overly-attached and dependent on others. And the DBM Cinco's activity, even for just a day, provided them with an opportunity to express themselves through artworks that could eventually help them gain the confidence to trust and interact with others.

Christmas is a celebration of love, joy, and peace – the greatest gifts we can ever give. This activity did not only benefit the Haven residents by way of our material donations, but also gave them the assurance that love, though they might not have found it at home, may come from other people.

As for me, this activity gave me long-lasting happiness, purpose, and fulfillment, knowing that we have, in our own little way, provided a colorful Christmas to those who are currently in bleak situations.

Dir. Cecile Narido, BMB-F Celebrating the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

In the more than three decades that I have worked with this beloved institution, my most memorable Christmas experience happened last December 2019.

It was the first time we celebrated the most marvelous time of the year with all the DBM Regional Offices. It was indeed wonderful to witness the members of the DBM family, especially the DBM officials, perform on stage that night.

Boncodin Hall was truly filled with cheer and the Christmas spirit of joy and laughter that night. The isolation that followed the next Christmas season was a stark contrast to that night, making it all the more cherished and unforgettable.

Anonymous, DBM NCR Celebrating Together, Creating Meaningful Experiences

My most memorable Christmas experience in the DBM was during the 2019 Christmas season. The DBM had a weekly rotational hosting of the flag ceremony, during which the assigned B/S/O showcased their talents through various presentations.



Our office was assigned in December, which was in time for the Christmas season. Despite the busy schedules of everyone, we managed to allot time for practice and budget for the props needed.

The DBM NCR is known to be the home of champions. Indeed, the competitive spirit in every one of us is ever-present. It warms my heart that despite our differences, and although the practice was tiring and difficult for some, we were able to put up a fun-filled presentation.

Ultimately, the hard work and unity among everyone made the experience more precious and truly worth it. Hopefully, after this pandemic, we can once again gather and celebrate together to create more meaningful experiences.

Maryjyl Arizala, DBM RO XIII

Christmas Brings Out the Kindness in Everyone

It was in 2019 when all the Regional Offices visited the Central Office for the year-end Christmas party that I suddenly had terrible abdominal pains. I was three months pregnant with my son back then.

This was a day I will never forget as I made a scene in the middle of the activity, barely able to walk as I exited the hall with everyone watching. I will never forget how embarrassed I was over what happened. But I will also never forget the kindness and hospitality everyone displayed that night, especially after the OPCCB Assistant Regional Director offered her office for me to rest in as I waited for the doctor to arrive.

Fortunately, everything turned out to be fine, and I was still able to attend one of the most memorable Christmas celebrations in the DBM that evening. Indeed, Christmas brings out the kindness in everyone.

Judith Hakim, AS-GSD

Distinct and Memorable

December 2019 was my very first Christmas season in the DBM. I was hired in July of that year and was not yet a regular employee. However, I was grateful because it was my comeback as a working mom.

The year-end Christmas party was historic because our then DBM Secretary Wendel Avisado invited employees from all

the regions to celebrate with the rest of the DBM family at the Central Office. The event was extraordinarily special because it was a “first-ever,” that it would certainly be remembered for many years to come.

A few months after, the pandemic happened. With Christmas just around the corner, we are reminded of what truly matters most in life and that the gifts we usually give or receive are just symbols of the love and friendship we have for each other.

If I may humbly share, it also felt like Christmas when the project that the Administrative Service initiated for our outsourced personnel during the DBM Anniversary gathered immense support and response.

I will never forget how the members of the DBM family shared their blessings with our janitors, security and maintenance personnel. Indeed, the pandemic has made us realize how to live each day while resonating with the real meaning and essence of Christmas – love, generosity, and kindness for everyone.

Ana, OPCCB

Treasured Experience

One of the most memorable Christmas experiences for me was when our office joined the “Office with the Best Christmas Decoration” contest back in 2012/2013. Back then, I was fairly new to the DBM.

Our office was located on the 2nd floor of Building II then. We conceptualized the best theme for our decorations during lunch breaks and stayed late after work to deck out the office.

It was indeed a great time for all of us, especially with the teamwork we all shared. Each and every one of us pitched in by cutting patterns, tracing paper designs, hanging ribbons on the walls and windows, among other things.

And when the time for the announcement of winners came, our hard work paid off as we bagged a place in the contest. The monetary prize we received served as our fund for more contests, and a portion also went to our “food fund.”

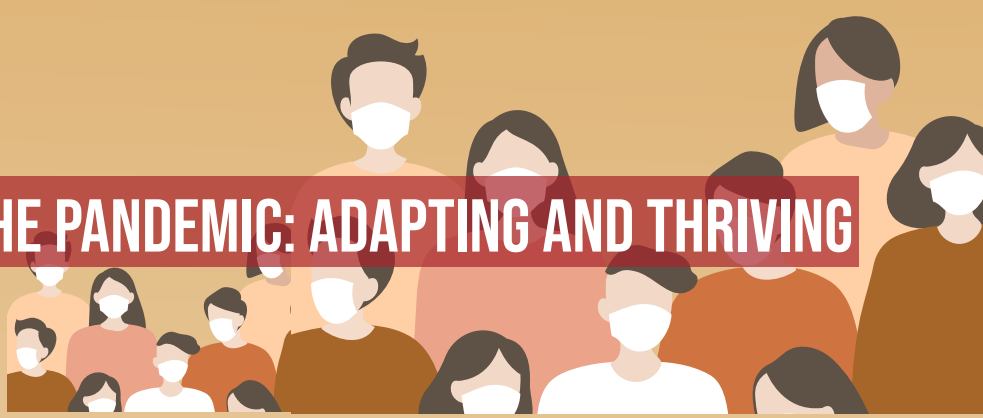
Celebrating Christmas with my second family, the OPCCB family, is already a remarkable and treasured experience in and of itself.

Cont'd on page 7

DBM IN 2021

ANOTHER YEAR INTO THE PANDEMIC: ADAPTING AND THRIVING

BY: JOY ALMAZAN



There is no doubt that our lives have been turned upside down with the onslaught of COVID-19, which raged across nations worldwide in 2020. The first few months had been difficult as the crisis altered our usual way of life, our so-called “normal.”

But, despite the many challenges that the pandemic has brought, from health to mobility to livelihood, we have learned to cope, adapt, and even thrive.

Innovation, creativity, and the commitment to serve and emerge stronger from the crisis have helped many companies to recover from COVID-19's adverse impacts. While surely companies and offices have their own “resurgence” stories to tell, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) likewise has its own chronicles of coping with the crisis. Indeed, the Department has been able to adapt and thrive during this challenging time by putting people first, optimizing technology through digital innovations, and of course, focusing the resources on where they should be.

OUR KEY MILESTONES IN 2021

*Putting People First***Hazard Pay for Government Workers**

President Rodrigo Duterte signed Administrative Order (AO) No. 43 on June 1, 2021 granting a hazard pay, not exceeding PHP500 per day, to government personnel who physically report for work during the period of implementation of an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) and a Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine. Said Order amended AO No. 26 issued last year.

Financial Assistance to Low-Income Households

The DBM has released a total of PHP37.567 billion financial assistance for low-income individuals and households residing in select Local Government Units (LGUs) placed under ECQ.



PHP37.567 B



PhP22.9 B released in March
LGUs: National Capital Region (NCR), the Provinces of Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal
Estimated beneficiaries: 22.915 M individuals

PhP14.677 B released in August
LGUs: NCR, Laguna, and Bataan
Estimated beneficiaries: 14.3 M individuals

**Establishment of Mental Health Program**

Recognizing the basic right of all Filipinos to mental health and the importance of the employees' mental well-being to effectively perform the DBM's mandate, the DBM has established a Mental Health Program through Department Order No. 32, s. 2021.

Said DO, which took effect on October 14, 2021, stipulates the guidelines and strategies to integrate and promote mental health care initiatives in the DBM's human resource and organizational development systems and services, as well as raise awareness of and sensitivity to mental health, among others.

Jab Well Done: Vaccination of DBM Employees

To help protect its workforce from COVID-19, the DBM, through its Administrative Service and Procurement Service (PS), organized a mass immunization for the DBM workforce, including its attached agencies. Facilitated by the Manila Health Department, a total of 800 employees of the DBM, PS, and Government Procurement Policy Board – Technical Support Office (GPPB-TSO) received their first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine last June 21 and July 19, 2021, respectively.

*Adapting to the New Normal: Optimizing the Power of Digitization***Launch of the Philippine Bidding Documents (PBD) Builder Portal**

The Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB), GPPB-Technical Support Office, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the PBD Builder Portal on January 20, 2021 during the FY 2021 Procurement Forum. The portal is designed to simplify and improve the efficiency of preparing PBDs by minimizing errors and facilitating the effective conduct of public procurement of goods and infrastructure projects.

Launch of the Action Document Releasing System

The DBM officially launched on October 1, 2021 the pilot implementation of the Action Document Releasing System (ADRS). Said system is a web-based application that facilitates the release of approved DBM action documents, such as the Special Allotment Release Orders (SAROs) and Advice of Notice of Cash Allocation Issued (ANCAI), including their attachments, in digital format directly to the authorized users of recipient agencies. A total of 14 pilot departments/agencies have completed their online training on the use of ADRS.

Pilot Departments/Agencies for the ADRS:

- DBM
- Commission on Audit
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- Department of Education
- Department of Finance
- Department of Health
- Department of Information & Communications Technology
- Department of the Interior and Local Government
- Department of National Defense
- Department of Public Works and Highways
- Department of Science and Technology
- Department of Social Welfare and Development
- National Commission for Culture and the Arts
- Presidential Communications Operations Office

A total of 3,785 ADRS authorized users were trained on the use of the ADRS.

Less than two months after its official launch, the DBM organized three sessions of the ADRS Online *Kumustahan* on November 10-11, 2021. Attended by 1,304 authorized users from various pilot agencies, the activity provided updates on the ADRS implementation, as well as solicited feedback from the users on how to further enhance the ADRS.

Online Budget Fora

For the first time, the DBM held this year's budget fora online. Conducted from January 25 to 29, the fora were done in two modalities. The asynchronous sessions (lectures and presentations) were held via the DBM Learning Management System (LMS) while the synchronous session, highlighted by the open forum, was conducted via the Zoom application. The LMS is an online e-learning portal where participants can access and review presentations on various topics prior to the open forum.

Digital Public Financial Management Competency Program (PFMCP)

The digitization of the PFMCP has been in the pipeline since the program was conceived in 2015, way before the COVID-19 pandemic. But, the current situation has accelerated its shift to the digital platform to ensure effective, comfortable, and safe learning for the PFM workforce. At present, the PFMCP is undergoing the digitization process with the help of a technical consultant. Below are some of the key activities for its digitization held in 2021:

- The Program's Foundation Track (FT) and Budgeting and Performance Track (BPT) have been reviewed and reconstructed accordingly to fit the digital platform.
- All six modules of the BPT are currently lodged in the Google classroom as its repository and will later be available in the DBM Learning Management System.
- The four modules of the FT, which were piloted in 2021, are currently being enhanced and converted to an improved digital material.
- A Training of Trainers was conducted from November 9 to 16, 2021 to enhance the aptitude and skills of the lecturers/subject matter experts (SMEs) that are suited for the digital platform. A total of 24 SMEs from the University of the Philippines-National College of Public Administration and

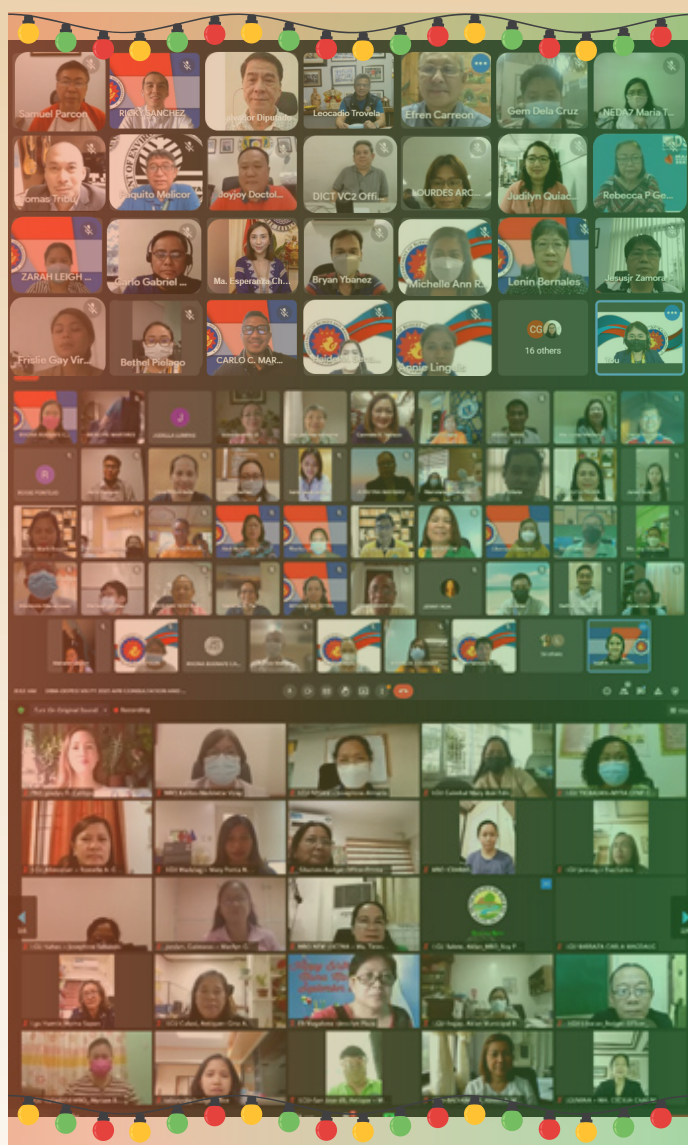
Governance (UP-NCPAG) and various offices of the DBM attended the training.

- The pilot run for the digital BPT Module 1: Introduction to Budgeting was conducted from November 29 to December 10 and was participated in by select PFM practitioners from Philippine Marine Corps (PMC), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA), and the National Mapping and Resource Information Agency (NAMRIA).

The digital PFMCP is targeted to be made available by 2022 through the select SUC partners of the PFMCP under its twinning arrangement.

Virtual Meetings and Consultations

Committed to continuously serve their clients even in the midst of the pandemic, DBM offices have resorted to online platforms such as Google Meet and Zoom to conduct their meetings and consultations. In particular, the DBM Regional Offices use these platforms to hold Agency Performance Reviews, Full-Time Delivery Unit meetings, and Regional Committee on Devolution meetings. They have likewise tapped these online platforms to update their clientele on the latest budgetary issuances and policies.



Cont'd on page 12

ANGAT LOKAL :

FOSTERING RECEPTIVE AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

BY: CRISPIN MAHRION ABACAN

“Not many of us get a second chance in life; and not many of us get a second chance in policy implementation. This is our second chance in implementing a good local government devolution program through the Supreme Court (SC) Mandanas-Garcia Ruling.”

Thus underscored Presidential Communications Operations Office Undersecretary Kristian Ablan in his closing remarks during the Orientation Meeting on the *Angat Lokal: Communications Plan and Strategy*¹ last September 29, 2021.

The “first chance” that Usec. Ablan had alluded to was in 1991, with the enactment of the Local Government Code (LGC), a landmark law that empowered local government units (LGUs) to exercise local autonomy. The LGC mandated and directed that LGUs be capacitated and transformed into self-reliant communities and effective partners in the attainment of national goals. This would be achieved through decentralization, whereby LGUs are given more powers, authority, responsibilities, and resources.

In the years that followed, though, not everything that the LGC had envisioned was achieved. And today, three decades since the enactment of the LGC, the government is once again pursuing the devolution policy. This time, through the implementation of the Supreme Court of the Philippines’ decision on the consolidated petitions of Congressman Hermilando I. Mandanas and other officials and Congressman Enrique T. Garcia, Jr.

The Mandanas-Garcia petitions challenged the manner in which the just shares of LGUs from the national taxes collected were being computed, arguing that the base amount should be the total of all national taxes collected, and not only the collections of the Bureau of Internal Revenue. The High Court’s final decision on the case – in favor of the petitioners – will result in a bigger tax base for the LGUs beginning FY 2022. This entails crucial preparation for both the national and local governments in terms of undertaking further decentralization of public services as provided in Section 17 of the LGC, while ensuring and respecting the fiscal autonomy of LGUs.

ANGAT LOKAL PH CAMPAIGN

To ensure full compliance with the Supreme Court Ruling on the Mandanas Case, Executive Order (EO) No. 138 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) were issued, mandating the implementation of the devolution process and directing national government agencies (NGAs) and LGUs to prepare their respective devolution transition plans (DTPs). In support of the devolution process, the Sub-Committee on Communications Strategy, established by virtue of Section 35 of the IRR of EO 138, launched its national policy information campaign drive, aptly called *Angat Lokal*.

Central to the development of the communication plan are the two core communications challenges identified from consultations conducted with LGU executives and representatives, as well as several NGAs. These are: 1) disinformation, misinformation, and lack of information, especially from the side of LGUs; and 2) lack of synergy between the NGAs and LGUs.

The communications strategy not only addresses information gaps, particularly on frequently raised issues and questions, but also promotes a whole-of-government approach for the campaign, enjoining both the NGAs and LGUs through the various leagues to lead and forge co-ownership of the various communication and outreach activities for a more cohesive and consistent messaging.

THE ANGAT LOKAL BRAND NARRATIVE

The campaign’s brand is *Angat Lokal*. Separately, “*Angat*” means to rise, to progress, to be lifted up, or to move forward. “*Lokal*” is chosen in tandem with *Angat*, as LGUs and the people are the main beneficiaries of the ruling.

Taken together, “*Angat Lokal*” thus encapsulates the message that largely centers on advancing capacities of local government units as frontliners in public service delivery. It signifies the national government’s commitment to continuously support and guide development-challenged local governments to ensure that no LGU is left behind.

Meanwhile, a sub-tagline was also developed to further communicate the gist of the opportunity presented by the ruling. The slogan “*Tamang Pondo, Angat Serbisyo*,” forwards the primary effect of the ruling – the provision of the just and rightful share in the national fiscal resources for the LGUs will further strengthen fiscal autonomy and provide improved services for their constituents, fostering participatory, accountable, responsible, and transparent local governance.



THE ANGAT LOKAL CORE MESSAGES

Since the nationwide campaign involves many parties, it is easy for the general public to get overwhelmed and overburdened with information, especially incorrect ones, which, if not addressed early on, may exacerbate misinformation. To manage the communication narrative, the Sub-Committee developed a message house to ensure and guide partners in the delivery of one cohesive message – across all channels and platforms, to the various intended audiences – the NG, LGUs, and the public.

The message house has four core messages, each with sub-messages related to the effective implementation of the ruling and its perceived impacts and goals. Essentially, these messages give the readers a general overview of the impacts of the ruling.

1. The SC ruling on the Mandanas-Garcia petitions is another milestone in the continuing journey towards genuine local autonomy and empowerment. The ruling clarifies the just share of LGUs from all national taxes to ensure fiscal decentralization.
2. The implementation of the SC ruling will pave the way for systematic alignment, harmonization, and complementation of NG and LG priorities, that will result in meaningful fiscal and local autonomy of LGUs.
3. Beginning 2022, local governments will have fiscal resources to provide improved services and foster participatory, accountable, responsive, and transparent local governance.
4. The NG is committed to continuously support and guide development-challenged local governments to ensure that no LGU is left behind.

ANGAT LOKAL AND THE VISION

“As we prepare to enter the last quarter of the year and look to 2022 – a landmark year for LGUs – we are also set to begin a new and challenging task,” said DBM Undersecretary and Sub-committee Chair Rolando U. Toledo during the Orientation Meeting on *Angat Lokal*.

“When we convey information, we must all be on the same page. While we can use different languages and dialects to convey our full devolution efforts, our messages must be the same to ensure consistency and avoid misunderstanding or inaccurate information,” he added.

The significance of having a solid communications plan and strategy in this endeavor cannot be overstated, as having one message despite the many voices will, hopefully, foster more receptive and supportive communities when the ruling is implemented in 2022 and beyond. Ultimately, with *Angat Lokal*, the unified efforts of both the national government and LGUs in attaining systematic alignment, harmonization, and complementation of the national and local governments’ priorities, will result in meaningful fiscal and local autonomy of the LGUs. ■

¹ The *Angat Lokal: Communications Plan and Strategy* is the national government’s blueprint for communicating the SC ruling and the full devolution policy to the stakeholders and the general public.

CELEBRATING WHAT MATTERS MOST

Cont'd from page 3



DBM OIC Tina Rose Marie Canda during the Christmas Tree Lighting event held on December 1, 2021

Anonymous, BITS Season of Giving

Although I have yet to experience in person the traditional Yuletide festivities and activities in the DBM, we were able to celebrate Christmas virtually last year, coinciding with the birthday celebration of former Undersecretary Laura B. Pascua.

I was one of the hosts of the event, so that was another new experience for me. I also met colleagues from other B/S/Os and immensely enjoyed the games and prizes. It brought out my competitiveness.

Hopefully, this year or the next, I can finally get to experience the usual Christmas merriment and celebration with the rest of the DBM family. ■



'ROSE' FROM THE RANKS

THE STORY OF ASEC. CLASARA

BY: EMIL JOHN MANGUERRA

A “fascination for the four-column trial balance” in government finances is how newly-appointed Assistant Secretary (ASec.) Cristina B. Clasara candidly recalled what wooed and won her over to what has since been a fulfilling career – analyzing, planning and managing the utilization of the country’s resources.

Probably not an idyllic image, if one is to go by how most youths, fresh from college, visualize their future. But ASec. Clasara had wanted to make the most of the knowledge and learnings she had worked for towards a college degree and a certified public accountant (CPA) board license. And although she may not have seen it that early, she had set herself on a path that would lead her – often a “rose among the thorns” in her field – to breaking the glass ceiling in the aspect of leadership in her chosen career.

A woman who rose through professional ranks in the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), her focus has since gone beyond the literal “four columns” of trial balance, as she has always found ways to share her “motherly” leadership in her DBM family.

Indeed, ASec. Clasara may be one of the most familiar officials in the DBM, but her journey in life has yet to be fully unfolded and heard. Among the hundreds of employees in various stages of the journey along the career ladder, she is a living proof that dreams do come true for those who love and value their work, and persevere. This is her story.

THE BEGINNING OF HER STORY

ASec. Clasara started her professional career at the National Accounting Office of the then Budget Commission (now DBM), determined to embark on a career as a CPA in order to optimize and enhance the knowledge and skills obtained in college from the Far Eastern University.

Government service, for her, opened a floodgate of opportunities and gave her fulfilment in what she does.

She was captivated even then by the realities behind trial balances, as she was able to read from them “the whole story on the status of government agencies’ financial performance – from appropriations, allotments, obligations and disbursements.”

Staying on track in the accounting field, ASec. Clasara went on to pursue higher education abroad. And it was then that she set her heart on working and staying in the DBM for good.

“I was given a chance to pursue my Master’s Degree in Commerce major in Accountancy at the University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia. After that, I felt it was just right to give back by staying and building a career in the DBM,” ASec. Clasara shared.

MOVING UP THE LADDER

The career that now spans more than four decades began in 1979, as an Accounts Analyst. From then on, the young CPA worked hard and dedicated her time and effort to learning the intricacies of government budgeting.

ASec. Clasara, who is a CESO III, rose from the ranks and worked across various job levels in the operations bureaus, and in October 2007 was appointed Chief Budget and Management Specialist. In the last quarter of the same year, she was promoted to Director to handle the operations of the DBM.

She received her latest appointment last September 2021, as Assistant Secretary of the Department, responsible for the Budget Preparation and Execution Group, with supervision over Budget and Management Bureaus A to F and the Budget Technical Bureau. She is also the concurrent Director of the Budget and Management Bureau E.

All the experiences in her past assignments have molded her into a woman of indefatigable spirit with strong commitment to public service. Working in the DBM for more than 40 years, she has discovered, proven and testifies that the proverbial greener pastures may actually be in one’s same workplace. While she could have left the DBM in search of new opportunities, she had opted to stay.

“I have found my purpose [in the DBM]. Rising from the ranks, it was full of memorable experiences that shaped me into the person that I am today. It was challenging and yet fulfilling,” ASec. Clasara said.

HER LEGACY

During her stint in the DBM, ASec. Clasara has been one of the “reformers” who led in the implementation of various reforms and improvements in the country’s budgeting system.

For one, she led the group that crafted the guidelines on the “Bottom-Up Budgeting (BuB),” a participatory budgeting initiative, when the concept was initially adopted in the Philippines after the Open Government Partnership Summit in

Brazil in 2012. The said government program allows genuine involvement of grassroots organizations and communities in the planning and budgeting processes, both at the local and national government levels.

The BuB was likewise adopted in State Universities and Colleges with the forging of the Budget Partnership Agreement that gave opportunities for their respective faculty, alumni, and students to be consulted and heard.

ASec. Clasara had also been a part of the Project Implementation Unit-Budget Reporting and Performance Standards Project of the Public and Financial Management (PFM) Reform Program. This aimed to harmonize, simplify and consolidate data structures and apply a consistent set of budgeting and accounting rules and regulations for generating financial and physical reports in accordance with plans, policies, and targets.

She was likewise a member of the Task Force on the Preparation of the Annual National Budget in Fiscal Years 2003 to 2005, which evaluated the budget proposals of departments/agencies of the national government.

Aside from this, she also worked as a Technical Support Staff of the Presidential Task Force on the Study and Reform of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) Procurement Process and Fund Disbursement during the aftermath of the Oakwood Mutiny in 2003. The group evaluated the efficiency of the Procurement and Fund Disbursement Systems of the AFP vis-à-vis delivery of its mandate, as well as recommended improvements to ensure the timely delivery of services for its logistical requirements.

Lastly, she became a member of the Budget Operations Manual Committee that updated the Manual of Operations, particularly on the section of accountability.

THE OTHER SIDE OF ASEC. CLASARA

ASec. Clasara may have made major contributions in policy-making and reforms, but outside of and beyond work she remains an ordinary and loving mother to her children, and a reliable friend to her colleagues.

Valuing persons beyond their professional performance, ASec. Clasara shared that letting go of some members of her staff who seek other opportunities is among her biggest challenges as a leader.

"While DBM is a good training ground for a public financial management practitioner, it is likewise a liability to the department because of the high turn-over of employees," she said.

ASec. Clasara is a known singer in the DBM. But unknown to many, she is a fan of international singer Lady Gaga. During her free time, she also enjoys watching K-dramas. An entertainment fan, she shared that she is impressed with the people behind these industries and their great imagination.

At home, ASec. Clasara is a doting grandparent – loving, caring, and with a very real tendency to spoil her grandchildren.



A WOMAN OF HUMILITY

All these years, ASec. Clasara has remained to be a woman whom every DBM employee can rely on, as a career supervisor and mentor, as well as a caring friend. A very approachable official who has a ready smile, contagious laughter, and a figure so tender and motherly, which have made her well-loved by many in the workplace.

For ASec. Clasara, the love and support she gained throughout the years have paved the way in building a fulfilling career path. As the DBM's new leader, she hopes to touch more lives while contributing further to national development.

"I am thankful to each one of them for the support, love and respect they have bestowed upon me. They are part of who I am today and I will be forever grateful," she said.



COMPENSATION COMPENDIUM

BY: THE ORGANIZATION, POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION BUREAU



UPGRADING OF NURSE II POSITION

Per Memorandum from the Executive Secretary dated June 1, 2021, the Office of the President (OP) directed the DBM to take necessary action to implement the upgrading of the former Nurse II position by one (1) Salary Grade (SG), i.e., from SG-15 to SG-16, as well as the retention of the position levels of Nurse III to Nurse VII with their corresponding SGs.

As clarified by the OP, the upgrading of the Nurse II positions shall apply to those covered under Item 3.0 of DBM Budget Circular (BC) No. 2020-4¹ and shall be effective June 1, 2021.

As a background, BC No. 2020-4 upgraded the SG of the entry-level of the Nurse position, i.e., from SG-11 to SG-15, consistent with Section 3 of Republic Act (RA) No. 9173 and the decision of the Supreme Court in Ang NARS Party-list, et al. versus the Executive Secretary, et al. (GR No. 215746).

As a result of the upgrading of the entry-level Nurse positions, the position attributes of the remaining levels in the Nurse positions were also modified under DBM BC No. 2020-4, resulting in a leaner series, i.e., from seven to six position levels. The changes in the position attributes of the non-entry-level Nurse positions were limited to the numerical suffixes as the SG allocations were retained.

To prescribe the rules and regulations on the upgrading of the previous Nurse II positions by one (1) SG, as well as to provide the administrative processes for the retention of the position titles of Nurse III to Nurse VII with their corresponding SG assignments, the DBM issued BC No. 2021-2 (Modification of Nurse Positions) dated August 25, 2021.

This Circular covers all previous Nurse II to Nurse VII positions whose position attributes were modified pursuant to BC No. 2020-4, whether regular, casual, or contractual in nature, full-time or part-time, now existing or thereafter created in the national government agencies (NGAs), including state universities and colleges (SUCs), government-owned or –controlled corporations (GOCCs), and local government units (LGUs) covered by the Compensation and Position Classification System (CPCS) under RA No. 6758 or the “Compensation and Position Classification Act of 1989,” as amended.

Excluded from the coverage of the Circular:

- Nurses in government agencies, including GOCCs, that are exempted from RA No. 6758, as amended, as expressly provided in their respective enabling law or charter, and are actually implementing their respective CPCS approved by the President;
- Nurses in GOCCs covered by CPCS established by the Governance Commission for GOCCs and approved by the President of the Philippines, under RA No. 10149 or the “GOCC Governance Act of 2011”; and
- Nurses hired without employee-employer relationship and funded from non-Personnel Services (PS) appropriations/budgets.

Item 5.1 of BC No. 2021-2 states that the position attributes of the following classes of Nurse positions are modified effective June 1, 2021:

Prior to BC No. 2020-4		BC No. 2020-4 January 1, 2020		Per OP Directive June 1, 2021	
Position Title	SG	Position Title	SG	Position Title	SG
Nurse I	11	Nurse I	15	Nurse I	15
Nurse II	15	Nurse I	15	Nurse II	16
Nurse III	17	Nurse II	17	Nurse III	17
Nurse IV	19	Nurse III	19	Nurse IV	19
Nurse V	20	Nurse IV	20	Nurse V	20
Nurse VI	22	Nurse V	22	Nurse VI	22
Nurse VII	24	Nurse VI	24	Nurse VII	24

Moreover, Item 6.1 states that the SG allocation of the former Nurse II, SG-15 positions is hereby upgraded by one SG effective not earlier than June 1, 2021, as follows:

Prior to BC No. 2020-4		BC No. 2020-4 January 1, 2020		Per OP Directive June 1, 2021	
Position Title	SG	Position Title	SG	Position Title	SG
Nurse II	15	Nurse I	15	Nurse I	16

The following salary rules shall apply in the case of incumbents in former Nurse II positions:

- The salaries of the incumbents in former Nurse II positions and currently occupying Nurse I/SG-15 items, i.e., those who were appointed as Nurse II prior to the implementation of BC No. 2020-4, shall be adjusted at the same salary steps as those of the previous SG allocation of their positions;
- The new salary rates shall be in accordance with the Second Tranche Monthly Salary Schedule for Civilian Personnel of the National Government under National Budget Circular No. 584 dated January 6, 2021 or the modified salary schedule being implemented by a GOCC in case of insufficiency of corporate funds; and
- If supported by sufficient funds, the salaries/wages of contractual/casual nurses who were previously appointed as Nurse II before the implementation of BC No. 2020-4 may be adjusted to Step 1 of SG-16 of the applicable salary schedule.

On the other hand, the following rules shall apply in the case of the LGUs:

- The new salary rates shall be in accordance with the applicable Salary Schedule adopted by the LGU pursuant to the provisions of Item 6.5 of Local Budget Circular No. 132 [Implementation of the Second Tranche of the Modified Salary Schedule for Local Government Personnel Pursuant to Republic Act (RA) No. 11466²] dated January 19, 2021; and
- The upgrading of the former Nurse II position, as well as the modification in position attributes of the other Nurse positions, are not within the purview of Section 325(f) of RA No. 7160³ which provides that: “No changes in designation or nomenclature of positions resulting in a promotion or demotion in rank or increase or decrease in compensation shall be allowed, except when the position is actually vacant x x x.”

For more details, BC No. 2021-2 can be accessed in the DBM’s official website (www.dbm.gov.ph).

¹ Upgrading of the Entry Level of Nurse Positions

² An Act Modifying the Salary Schedule for Civilian Government Personnel and Authorizing the Grant of Additional Benefits, and For Other Purposes, dated January 8, 2020

³ An Act Providing for a Local Government Code of 1991, dated October 10, 1991

ENTITLEMENT TO BACKWAGES AND OTHER BENEFITS WHEN THE DECISION WAS SILENT AS TO THEIR RECOVERY¹

A certain government employee was charged for violation of Sections 3(a),² (c),³ (e)⁴ and (h)⁵ of Republic Act (RA) No. 3019;⁶ paragraphs 1 to 6 of Section 19⁷ of RA No. 6770⁸; and for grave misconduct, usurpation of authority, and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service.

A Decision dated December 26, 2013, rendered by the Office of the Ombudsman (OMB), dismissed the charges of usurpation of authority and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service against the government employee. However, the subject employee was found guilty of grave misconduct and meted out the penalty of dismissal from the service.

A Motion for Reconsideration was filed but denied, through OMB Order dated October 1, 2014. Subsequently, a Petition for Review was filed before the Court of Appeals (CA)-Cagayan de Oro City. Thereafter, a Decision dated March 15, 2018 rendered by the CA granted the petition for review, and subsequently reversed and set aside the previous decisions of the OMB finding the said government employee guilty of grave misconduct. The said Decision exonerated the government employee of the offense charged, when the CA declared that, there was no basis to hold the petitioner administratively liable for grave, or even simple, misconduct. However, there was no pronouncement as to the entitlement of the said employee to backwages and other benefits which accrued from the time he was separated from service.

In a subsequent CA Resolution dated October 22, 2019, the Division Clerk of Court was directed to issue an Entry of Judgment stating that the CA Decision had become final and executory on June 27, 2019. Thus, the government employee resumed his duties in his previous position, as certified by the concerned government agency.

Going to the main issue at hand, Section 74⁹ Rule 14 of the 2017 Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service (2017 RACCS), issued by the Civil Service Commission (CSC), provides clear policies on the entitlement of backwages and other similar benefits in the case of the subject employee. Under this section, only those officials or employees who had been: (i) illegally dismissed or suspended but exonerated or just reprimanded, and ordered reinstated in the service; or (ii) placed under preventive suspension which was later declared by the CSC as invalid, are entitled to backwages and other similar benefits.

Moreover, Section 58¹⁰ Rule 10 of the 2017 RACCS provides that exoneration will result in reinstatement and payment of backwages, and all benefits accrued to him as if he had not been dismissed.

Thus, in the case of *Campol v. Balao-as, et al.*,¹¹ the Supreme Court (SC) emphasized that “[a]n employee of the civil service who is ordered reinstated is also entitled to the full payment of his or her backwages xxx.” The High Court continued: “(T)he twin award of reinstatement and payment of full backwages are dictated by the constitutional mandate to protect civil service employees’ right to security of tenure.”

On the issue of the silence of the CA Decision as to the payment of backwages and other benefits, the SC ruled in *Edgar R. Del Castillo vs. CSC, et al.*¹² that:

“Having been exonerated of the charges against him, petitioner should clearly be awarded back salaries, the silence of the MSPB’s decision notwithstanding. In *Cristobal vs. Melchor*, Justice Claudio Teehankee, speaking for this Court, said:

“As likewise reaffirmed by the Court in *Perez vs. Evite*, ‘under Section 45 of Rule 39, Rules of Court...a **judgment is not confined to what appears upon the face of the decision, but also those necessarily included therein or necessary thereto.**’ The late Chief Justice Fred Ruiz Castro stressed for the Court in *Padua vs. Robles* that ‘(T)he sufficiency and efficacy of a judgment must be tested by its substance rather than its form. In construing a judgment, its legal effects, including such effects that necessarily follow because of legal implications, rather than the language used, govern. Also its meaning, operation, and consequences must be ascertained like any other written instrument. Thus, a judgment rests on the intention of the court as gathered from every part thereof, including the situation to which it applies and the attendant circumstances.’” (Boldface supplied)

Furthermore, it is significant to note that, in the separate opinion of then Justice Artemio Panganiban (who eventually became the Chief Justice) in the case of *Hon. Ricardo T. Gloria v. CA*,¹³ he stated that, “such silence of the law should not *ipso facto* be interpreted as a denial of the right, pursuant to rules on statutory construction.” The Honorable Chief Justice further added that in the absence of an express prohibition on the said matter, the ruling should be settled in favor of the employee, reflecting the constitutional mandate of the State to protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare.

In view of the foregoing, the government employee concerned is entitled to the payment of backwages and other benefits accrued to him, as if he did not leave the office, notwithstanding the absence of the express award for their recovery in the subject CA Decision.

¹ Lifted from LS Memorandum dated November 5, 2021

² Section 3. Corrupt practices of public officers. In addition to acts or omissions of public officers already penalized by existing law, the following shall constitute corrupt practices of any public officer and are hereby declared to be unlawful: (a) Persuading, inducing or influencing another public officer to perform an act constituting a violation of rules and regulations duly promulgated by competent authority or an offense in connection with the official duties of the latter, or allowing himself to be persuaded, induced, or influenced to commit such violation or offense.

³ (c) Directly or indirectly requesting or receiving any gift, present or other pecuniary or material benefit, for himself or for another, from any person for whom the public officer, in any manner or capacity, has secured or obtained, or will secure or obtain, any Government permit or license, in consideration for the help given or to be given, without prejudice to Section thirteen of this Act.

⁴ (e) Causing any undue injury to any party, including the Government, or giving any private party any unwarranted benefits, advantage or preference in the discharge of his official administrative or judicial functions through manifest partiality, evident bad faith or gross inexcusable negligence. This provision shall apply to officers and employees of offices or government corporations charged with the grant of licenses or permits or other concessions.

⁵ (h) Directly or indirectly having financing or pecuniary interest in any business, contract or transaction in connection with which he intervenes or takes part in his official capacity, or in which he is prohibited by the Constitution or by any law from having any interest.

⁶ The Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act

⁷ Section 19. Administrative Complaints. — The Ombudsman shall act on all complaints relating but not limited to acts or omissions which:

(1) Are contrary to law or regulation;
(2) Are unreasonable, unfair, oppressive or discriminatory;
(3) Are inconsistent with the general course of an agency’s functions, though in accordance with law;
(4) Proceed from a mistake of law or an arbitrary ascertainment of facts;
(5) Are in the exercise of discretionary powers but for an improper purpose; or
(6) Are otherwise irregular, immoral or devoid of justification.

⁸ The Ombudsman Act of 1989

⁹ Section 74. Who are Entitled. The following are entitled to back wages and other similar benefits:

a. An illegally dismissed or suspended official or employee who is exonerated/reprimanded and ordered reinstated in the service; and
b. A respondent placed under preventive suspension, whose order of suspension was declared by the Commission as invalid.

¹⁰ Section 58. Effects of Exoneration on Certain Penalties- xxx

d. In case the penalty is dismissal, the respondent shall immediately be reinstated without loss of seniority rights and with payment of back wages and all benefits which would have accrued as if the respondent has not been illegally terminated; xxx

¹¹ 810 SCRA 574 (2011)

¹² 278 SCRA 209 (1997)

¹³ 306 SCRA 297 (1999)

NEWS BRIEF

DBM'S LGRCB BAGS FIRST PLACE IN PH-EITI RECOGNITION CEREMONY



Source: PH-EITI FB page

The Local Government Regional Coordination Bureau (LGRCB) of the Department of Budget and Management was recognized as the top-performing entity for the National Government Agency Category during the Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (PH-EITI) Recognition Ceremony held last November 26, 2021. "The PH-EITI is a government-led, multi-stakeholder initiative implementing EITI -- the global standard that promotes open, accountable management, and good governance of oil, gas, and mineral resources."¹ It aims, among others, to enhance public understanding of the management of natural resources, improve available data, and strengthen national resource management and governance systems.²

In this year's virtual roadshow, DBM-LGRCB participated by highlighting the National Wealth Online Portal, which provides the releases of shares of local government units in the utilization and development of national wealth. The said Online Portal can be accessed by all stakeholders concerned through the DBM website. The said award was based on several criteria, such as compliance with the requirements of the EITI, data accuracy and comprehensiveness, and timeliness of data disclosure.

¹ Retrieved from <https://pheiiti.dof.gov.ph/who-we-are/>.

² Ibid.

ANOTHER YEAR INTO THE PANDEMIC

Cont'd from page 5

Prioritizing the Essential in the Budget

Submission of the FY 2022 Proposed Budget

Continuing the fight against COVID-19 and pursuing sustainable and inclusive growth, the President, through the DBM, has submitted to Congress a PhP5.024 trillion FY 2022 proposed Budget last August. Higher by 11.5 percent than this year's budget of PhP4.506 trillion, the proposed Budget is anchored on three pillars: 1) Building Resilience amidst the Pandemic; 2) Sustaining the Momentum towards Recovery; and 3) Continuing the Legacy of Infrastructure Development.

To ensure the country's path to recovery, the Social Services and Economic sectors will continue to receive the biggest share of the budget to fund health-related services and social assistance, as well as key infrastructure and livelihood programs and projects.

PhP690.26 Billion Released for COVID-19 Response as of End-Q3

The DBM has released a total of PhP690.26 billion as of September 30, 2021 to continuously support the government's COVID-19 response. The additional releases during the third quarter of 2021 were charged against the FY 2021 General Appropriations Act following the expiration of the validity of funds under the Bayanihan 1 and 2 laws. Said releases covered payment for the COVID-19 special risk allowance of public and private health workers, purchase of COVID-19 vaccine ancillaries, procurement of RT-PCR testing kits and renewal of contracts for hiring of healthcare professionals, among others.

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