

INSIGHT FROM A DBM JUNIOR LEADER

A New DBM Bureau for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Brian Carlo P. Bernal¹

“**K**ailangan natin malaman na ang pera ni Juan ay napupunta kung saan talaga ito nakalaan (We must know if Juan’s taxes go to where these are supposed to go).”

Good governance is key to inclusive economic development. Most people think innovations are disruptive and out of this world. What people do not know is that innovations can create better solutions. Building something new requires a lot of time and effort. Obstacles and difficulties are expected to emerge along the way, but with persistence and teamwork these hindrances can be overcome.

Transparency and accountability are qualities that should be present in government. Here is where monitoring and evaluation (M&E) shows its importance. Knowing where the money went and how it was used is only half of it. The DBM as it dispenses its oversight function should also evaluate the performance of implementing agencies in order for us to address issues or concerns that arise in the implementation of the agencies’ programs and projects. We need to know which programs and projects we fund deliver the results we want. We need to identify what works and what does not. This information can help us make better decisions because they are evidence-based.

The need for information and the increasing demand for fiscal transparency and accountability paved the way for the creation of the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Bureau (PMEB). Most people can be close-minded when it comes to trying something new. People can become complacent with the norm and may think that innovation is a negative thing. However, from what I have read and experienced, new ideas can create better opportunities and solutions.

By taking part in setting up the PMEB, I saw the importance of M&E.

Our first challenge in setting up the bureau was turning the vision into action. Spearheaded by Usec. Mario Relampagos, the first months of the PMEB’s implementation were packed with learning opportunities. As a member of the newly established PMEB, I was driven by passion to help set it up and achieve its goals. This new challenge required a lot of grit and inspiration, of which USEC Mario shared a lot, influencing me and other members of the bureau.

As a newly established bureau, one of the most pressing matters we had to address was integrating ourselves into the DBM. We had to answer these questions: What is our image or identity as a bureau? What output could we contribute to the DBM? Is it something new or just a duplication of the work of another department or bureau? We tackled these questions during the countless meetings that we had in and outside of the DBM. Under the leadership of Asec. Maxine Tanya Hamada, we saw a glimpse of who we wanted to be and what we wanted to do.

The most recent issue that the PMEB faced was the direction in which the bureau would go in relation to its M&E activities, the extent of analysis, and the sources of data, just to name a few. With the appointment of Dir. Tessie Gregorio as the new PMEB head, these concerns had been addressed gradually.

The bureau is still a work in progress but its end goal remains: “*Gusto naming malagyan ng kwento ang kwenta para masigurado na walang nasasayang na pera* (We want to establish a clear story for each peso to ensure that no money is wasted).”

¹As of this publication, Bernal is a Budget and Management Specialist II of the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Bureau.