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Nurturing Leadership Program: An end to a new beginning...

The Royal Civil Service Commission partnering with the Ulrich Allen Leadership Capital launched the “Nurturing Leadership Program” for leaders in the Civil Service on October 19, 2021. The Commission has been working towards the Vision of “An engaged and responsive Civil Service accelerating and securing Bhutan’s status as a developed country” where one of the critical levers is strengthening leadership in the agencies. Towards this end, the Ulrich Allen Leadership Capital (UALC) was identified to carry out a one-year Project on leadership in the Civil Service.



The UALC leadership development approach employs a participatory research-based methodology that catalyzed action among Civil Service leaders, who actively engaged with stakeholders to co-design and implement initiatives to improve effectiveness and efficiency of civil service systems and services. The program addresses the need to make organizational systemic improvements while simultaneously supporting Civil Service leaders in their efforts to continuously improve leadership skills.

Rather than simply attending a traditional training course, leaders began the year-long program by actively focusing on systems thinking and participatory stakeholder engagement. Civil Service Executives and School Principals were trained to teach over 625 civil servants to conduct over 6,800 face-to-face interviews and gather survey data from internal and external stakeholders. Leaders were then asked to conduct 125 “North Star” workshops where they worked with teams to analyze stakeholder input and identify stakeholder-priority initiatives.

Co-created initiatives were then aligned with national priorities and projects became leadership laboratories

where they learned and implemented high-impact leadership tools while executing project objectives. Each leader learned performance coaching skills and built high-performing “five-star teams”. Leaders were also given a practical leadership toolkit deployed via micro learning e-modules, with tools supporting performance accountability, strategic sensing, decision making, trust, agile problem solving, collaboration, and change management. Leaders reported a 74% increase in their stakeholder engagement capability, a 90% improvement in their coaching skills, and increases of 94% in high-impact team building, 108% in collaboration, 98% in agile problem solving, 85% in performance accountability, and a 97% increase in change management capability.

Throughout the program, as leaders learned and practiced critical leadership skills, they also collectively completed 125 projects with results ranging from better waste management practices to improved health outcomes to accelerated academic performance for secondary students. Over 96% of 2,500+ stakeholders surveyed at the end of the program agreed that project efforts improved the situation, and stakeholder satisfaction increased by an average of over 24%.

On September 27th a convention was held to showcase project work and Hon’ble Prime Minister, Dr. Lotay Tshering, presented several NLP program-specific awards, which were given to leaders who demonstrated exemplary performance in their efforts to learn and implement the leadership tools while executing their projects. 96% of participants indicated that the program was “more effective than other leadership training programs they have attended.” Several expressed gratitude and said, “this program changed my life.” Indeed, although the trek towards enlightened human capability development and deployment is long and deliberate, the NLP program has provided civil service systems and leaders with a powerful boost.

