

After almost 100 years on the scene, and in the face of increased globalization, our deputy ministers decided DFAIT was due for some important introspection. One thing seemed certain: it is time for change. DFAIT, for all of its valuable contributions and assets, needs to keep pace with an ever-evolving world while responding to government calls for renewal.

And so the transformation begins...

EMBRACING CHANGE

BY NATHALIE TRÉPANIÉ

“There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered.”

—Nelson Mandela

Two very recognizable faces stare across at Lucie Edwards, the head of the Office of Transformation (FXIT), every day. They serve as her inspiration.

“I have a picture of Nelson Mandela and one of the King of Bhutan in my office as symbols of change,” explains Lucie, adding: “The two leaders convinced their countrymen to embrace a sweeping transformation for their respective societies—in one case, turning a feudal monarchy into a democracy and, in the other case, turning apartheid into a rainbow nation. But even more impressive, they didn’t dictate what had to happen. They trusted ordinary people, people like you and me, to set the change agenda and see it through.”

And a mighty wind of change is about to sweep through the corridors and missions of DFAIT. The change that will guarantee the department’s transformation was spearheaded by our deputy ministers, in answer to government calls for renewal and in light of our 100-year anniversary.

As the lead in this process, Lucie and her team are overseeing a transformation that will fundamentally reshape the department and its work. And while the goals will not be achieved without some challenges and perhaps even some pains, in the end she is confident that DFAIT’s transformation is good news.

“Employees will see three kinds of benefits. The emphasis on enriching career experience, for example, is going to be very valuable to employees. The emphasis on delivering client services and a range of program management skills will significantly improve life experience. And in an organization that has tremendous esprit de corps and a tradition of pride about working for a great national institution, being able to deliver on our priorities, and deliver well, will be tremendously important for morale,”

says Lucie. “I think people will feel even more proud to work for a very strong, very effective organization.”

Lucie must ensure that DFAIT’s transformation meets all of its goals. Transformation will be sweeping and will focus on six key areas: alignment with government priorities; strengthening our international platform; improving services to Canadians, focussing on our core policy business; strengthening accountability; and renewing our human resources. Lucie and her team, which will eventually consist of six employees and a virtual team drawn from all parts of the department, will ensure that all those objectives are met in a timely manner.

Phase I will take us through the first 18 months of a five-year transformation agenda. Resources are being devoted to our four departmental priorities: Afghanistan, the Americas, emerging markets and transformation.



SHAKING THINGS UP: As head of the Office of Transformation, Lucie Edwards is overseeing a transformation that will fundamentally reshape the department and its work.