Seminar on
Public Sector Leadership Capacity Development for Good Governance in Africa

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by CAFRAD

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# Table of Contents

1. Introduction ................................................................................................................ 3  
2. Characteristics of African Ministries of Public Service ............................................. 3  
3. Previous participation in leadership development programme ..................................... 6  
4. Needs for participation in leadership capacity development programme ....................... 7  
5. Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 11
1. **Introduction**

Leadership is a crucial factor in development. In all human undertakings, leadership provides enlightenment, insight and visioning. It is the motor to bring about social and economic development. This is true for all countries and regions. However, it assumes urgency in Africa, where there is renewed determination by political leaders to confront structural, institutional and related factors which limited the continent’s development.

The urgency of improving leadership in Africa has been recognized through various meetings and studies on governance and public sector management. As results, several initiatives on leadership capacity development are emerging at national, sub-regional and regional levels. But, the most comprehensive and vital initiative is the NEPAD programme on Public Sector Leadership Capacity Development for Good Governance in Africa. It is part of a larger programme aimed at transforming governance in Africa.

In the framework of the NEPAD programme and in collaboration with UNDESA/DPADM, CAFRAD conducted a short survey on leadership capacity development needs identification. The survey was conducted from March to June 2003, through a questionnaire sent for completion to all African Ministers in charge of Public Service. The questionnaire contained items such as: the official name of the Ministry/Department; previous participation in leadership capacity development programme, desire to participate in a new programme on the matter, estimated duration for the programme, rank-ordering of suggested leadership skills-areas, inclusion of very senior administrative staff as participants, etc. The scope of the questionnaire was very limited because its purpose served just to assist in drafting an aide memoir to guide the leadership capacity development programme. Through the document, Public Service, Civil Service and Public Administration, are used, in some cases to mean the same thing. The analysis of the questionnaires provided the results described below:

2. **Characteristics of African Ministries of Public Service**

Out of the 52 questionnaires which were sent out, 22 were returned, with a rate of return of 42.3%, that includes 12 responses in French, 9 in English and one in Portuguese. With regard to the names used to designate the Ministry in charge of the Public Service, African countries use various names, such as:

- Ministry of Public/Civil Service
- Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform
- Ministry of Public Service, Administrative Reform and State Reform
- Ministry of Public Service and Labour
- Ministry of Public Service, Labour, Professional Training and Social Affairs
- Ministry of Staff Administration
- Secretariat of the State for Public Service and Administrative Reform
- Office of the Head of the Civil Service
- Personnel Management Office.
The name or designation of the Ministry is in relation with its mandate or mission. While some designations are limited to Public/Civil Service, others include additional responsibilities in labour, administrative reform, professional training or State reform. In some countries, the Ministry or the Office in charge of Public Service works directly under the Prime Ministry or under the Cabinet of the Presidency. There is, therefore, a diversification and a great importance in the responsibilities of the Ministry of Public Service.

Whatever the designation, success in carrying out the missions is largely dependant on the leadership of the Minister and the personnel. Thus, the necessity for a special programme devoted to upgrade and develop the capacity and the leadership skills of Ministers and the senior staff.

The heavy responsibility of the Ministry of Public Service is again well stated through the responses provided, when a question was asked on the major objectives or mission of the Ministry of Public Service. The objectives vary according to the mandate and the place of the Ministry in the government. The following are some of the objectives/missions provided, to:

- Transform and develop the civil service underdevelopment; ensure personnel management requirements;
- Create an efficient civil service; ensure harmony between labour, business, social dialogue and protection of citizens and their welfare;
- Direct and coordinate the development of public service, the provincial and local governments; training of civil servants; supervision of the public sector reform;
- Provide leadership, direction, management and administration of the Nation’s civil service to execute government policies and programmes;
- Put in place and/or implement human resources policies that ensure attraction, development and retention of competent personnel in the public service;
- Create a modern and efficient public service to achieve excellence in the delivery of public services and to ensure good governance;
- Coordinate the effective implementation of government policies and systems; monitor and evaluate the overall performance of the public service for the efficient and administration of government;
- Ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of service reform and revitalize H.R. Management system;
- Ensure productivity and sound public service that effectively contribute to development; promote and enhance labour;
- Conduct institutional reform for the development of public administration;
- Formulate and implement the policy of government on public service;
- Provide administration of the State personnel; improve the quality of the public service and the value of human resources;
- Ensure the implementation of the government’s policy on public service; promote and conduct the policies of administrative reform and state modernisation; ensure the juridical management of the State Personnel;
• Manage the careers and salaries of civil servants;
• Prepare and manage the budget for civil servants and conduct administrative reform;
• Manage and develop competence of civil servants; promote labour and conduct administrative reform;
• Implement the policies of government in its area of competence;
• Provide the public service with competent and motivated personnel; promote labour in all its aspects; put in place an administration for development;
• Formulate and implement the policy of government on civil servants management and administrative reform;
• Consolidate existing jobs, improve labour legislation, develop capacities and create new jobs;
• Study, propose and ensure the policy of government on State and administrative reforms; ensure the efficiency of public administration through reform, simplification and modernisation of decision process.

The effective implementation of these valuable objectives remains still a major challenge for most countries. When asked to indicate the main challenges facing the Ministry/Department, respondents provided the follows:
• Revitalization of work values and ethics; increasing individual and team effectiveness; and creating an organization culture of achievement and excellence;
• Creation of a conducive environment for people to try their ideas and test innovation;
• Public service reform programme to see that there is quality delivery of services provided in the most effective and efficient manner;
• Motivating people to go for training;
• Conducting public sector reform and training of civil servants;
• Retention of a professionally qualified leadership; increase labour productivity for economic growth and coverage of vulnerable group in social protection;
• Staff-development and retention; capacity constraints; use of ICT in personnel management and human resources development;
• Insufficiency of financial resources to implement objectives; lack of human resources and difficulty of coordination among ministries;
• Ensure active participation of various entities on the process of reform; guaranty the necessary performance of the public sector and of the civil servants;
• Rational use of competences; institutionalisation of performance evaluation in the public sector;
• Best management of personnel of the civil service; best implementation of standards and security on employment;
• Lack of qualified human resources; lack of financial resources; obsolete regulations;
• Chronic under-payment of civil servants; structures and infrastructures inappropriate; incapacity of the public service to deliver service properly; backwardness in the use of ICT (e-governance);
• Insufficiency of budgetary policy to fund projects; use of ICT in public service management; deconcentration of civil servants management;
• Ensure rational management of finance and personnel;
• Administrative and public service reform.

3. Previous participation in leadership development programme

On the question whether respondents have ever participated in a programme (retreat, lecture, course, etc) on leadership development programme, 50% responded that they have taken part in such programme, 45.5% have not yet participated in a leadership capacities development programme and one respondent does not know whether he/she has already benefited from such programme.

Those who had already taken part in such programme stated the aspects which were emphasized as follows:

• Critical aspects for successful planning;
• Staff appraisal systems for monitoring and evaluation of output;
• H.R. training for senior management;
• Decentralization of existing functions and identification of key players;
• Management reform and good governance;
• Leadership-policy formulation; team building, motivation, skills development, planning;
• New orientation-dealing with immediate and future issues of governance;
• Corporate values; performance management; change management; effective communication; appropriate reward practices;
• Speed; flexibility; responsiveness; quality;
• Communication;
• Organization and development strategies; team building; inter-group development; developing local strategic models; challenges of modern leadership;
• Human, finance and strategic management, information;
• Democratization of institutions; human resources competence development; fight against corruption; accountability; decision-making;
• Redefining the role of the State; privatisation of public services; role of the civil society in the administration of public services.
A question was asked whether the previous training programme met the needs and aspirations, and improved participants’ leadership skills. Only 45.4% responded in the affirmative, one was partially satisfied and the remaining group, 54.5%, was not satisfied. The programmes did not respond to their expectations and did not improve their leadership skills and capacities. Several reasons may cause the low level of satisfaction. One of them may be that, these kinds of participants did not find appropriate programmes matching with their needs and aspirations.

4. Needs for participation in leadership capacity development programme

When asked on their willingness to take part in a future leadership capacity development programme, those who have previously taken part in such programme and those who have not yet have that opportunity responded positively. They all (100%) indicated their desire to participate in a leadership development programme. The needs therefore exist and the expectations are very high. But what type of programme can satisfy this high demanding level of decision and policy makers?

Bearing in mind this concern, a list of ten (10) skills-areas was proposed to respondents for rank-ordering. Respondents were asked to rank-order the proposed items in importance, in accordance with their experience as leaders. The exercise provided the following list, ranked from the most important to the least.

1. Strategic visioning and planning;
2. Communication with staff and citizens and/or clients;
3. Performance measurement and enhancement;
4. Ethics and diversity management;
5. Democratic institutions building;
6. Understanding the new international order, and of the place of states and regions within it;
7. ICTs in development;
8. Financial management;
9. Initiation and nurturing collaboration and partnership (with non-state actors, regional and international bodies, etc);
10. Conflicts management (negotiation, resolution, etc).

From their points of view, respondents to the questionnaire believe that strategic visioning and planning, communication with staff and citizens and/or clients, performance measurement and enhancement, ethics and diversity management are among the most appropriate area-skills or competence which are required to become a successful leader. But, this is just the global picture provided from the process of rank-ordering. In reality, the rank-ordering varied from country to country, depending on the context. For example, while strategic visioning and planning was ranked number one by most respondents, some ranked this item number ten (the last in importance). Also conflict management was ranked number ten (10) on the general ordering, it was number one for some respondents. This means that all these skill-areas are for interest to respondents and may contribute to their leadership capacity development.
Respondents were also asked, in addition to the ten (10) skill-areas listed above, to indicate other areas which merit attention in developing leadership capacity. Those who responded to the question provide the following areas:

- Core values as pillars of excellence in inter-group warfare;
- Mentoring, counselling, coaching, analytical, presentation, reporting;
- Understanding African institutional structures;
- Good governance – best practices,
- Senior management training and development,
- Relationship between senior civil servant and politicians,
- Decentralization and public sector reform;
- Administrative planning and programming, including the analysis of core areas, posts and procedures for a progressive public administration, retribution of personnel, juridical analysis of administrative acts;
- Decentralization, gender, equity, corruption, ethics, transparency, accountability;
- Evaluation of public policies;
- Mode of public service management, delegation and externalisation of public service;
- Emergency management and risks planning;
- Motivation and mobilization of personnel organizational decision-making process change and change management;
- H.R. management and development
- Management patrimony resources;
- Promoting motivation in the public service;
- Time and information management;
- Total quality management in the public sector;
- Adaptation in the environment taking into account of mentality;
- Initiation on the sense and values of the State Public Service,
- Decentralization, deconcentration and power delegation;
- Techniques of supervision of private sector and civil society organization;
- Conception and implementation of public policies on administrative reform.
- Training of trainers on public policy management;
- Objectives and evaluation of international cooperation by the Ministry of Public Service;
- Techniques of political leaders and civil servants;
- Identification and enhancement of leadership qualities.
In connection with the participation in a leadership capacity development programme, the following question was asked: if you were to participate in such activity, do you think it would be useful to include very senior administrative staff as participants? All the respondents said yes, except one. Political leaders would like to participate in a leadership capacity development programme including their very senior administrative staff for the main reasons provided below:

- Leadership is a two way process: the top down and bottom up. It will ease communication with senior administrative staff and share views and strategies;
- The interface between ministers and senior administrative staff is key to the success and development;
- To create cohesion and partnership in the achievement of objectives;

From these various reasons, it is understood that leadership is required not only for political, economic, social and administrative leaders but also for their senior administrative staff. By being exposed to the same knowledge and experience, the two groups can enhance harmony and performance.

But, the respondent who is opposed to the participation of senior administrative staff indicated that the participation of that group may create political pressure and complex of superiority, preventing real freedom of expression.

When asked on kind of skills which would be most useful to develop for senior administrative staff, respondents stated the following items:

- Leading not managing; understanding of culture and its impact on performance; the value of delegation;
- Understanding politicians, their pressures and needs, and to balance that with the rules and procedures;
- Strategic planning;
- Analytical skills
- Effective communication
- Mentoring, counselling
- Negotiation skills
- Management and analytic skills since they operate at both strategic and operational decision-making levels;
- The drafting of policies; the formulation of strategies; the monitoring of performance;
- Management skills
- Projects monitoring and evaluation
- Negotiation skills
- Collaboration; comprehension and dialogue;
- Knowledge of regulations, status and other legal documents relating to public administration; respect of the human rights and the respects of the rights of civil servants at all levels; motivation and incentive of civil servants;
• Work for results, with impact on citizens;
• Strategic planning;
• The know-how;
• Planning, management and communication;
• Identification of the needs of clients; strategic planning; the culture of determining the standards of performance of programmes;
• Adaptation to situations; capacity of leading teams;
• Public management; techniques of planning and development of projects; information and communication technologies; improvement and evaluation of performance;
• Team management;
• Technical control and evaluation
• Mastery of technical tools
• Exchange of experiences
• Technical competence
• Aptitude to manage
• Capacity of creation and managing
• Relationship with politicians, responsibility in definition and follow-up of policies;
• Capacity and commitment in developing projects and managing human, financial and materials resources.

Respondents were further asked to indicate an ideal duration of such activity. The proposed duration ranged from 2 days to 180 days, as follows:
- 2 – 3 days
- 3 days
- 3-4 days
- 3-5 days
- 5 days (7 respondents)
- 5-7 days
- 7 days (3 respondents)
- 10 days = 2 weeks
- 15 days = 3 weeks (4 respondents)
- 30 days = 4 weeks
- 180 days
According to this estimation, the preference is for 5 days (7 choices), followed by 15 days (4 choices) and then by 7 days (3 choices). If 7 days and 5 days can be matched, this will give 11 choices for one week. This duration is to be taken into account in a leadership capacity development programme.

5. Conclusion

Leadership is a skill recognized to bring change and to improve governance and public service management. Leadership is required in all levels and for all civil servants. Building capacities in leadership is therefore a great need toward improvement and change. However, to effectively improve leadership skills and capacities, particular attention should be given to the professional, administrative and political environment of Ministries. Therefore, when designing leadership capacity development programmes, consideration should be taken on the following:

A. In most African countries, Ministries of Public Service have diverse responsibilities. Their mandate ranges from managing the State personnel to modernizing public services and reforming the State governance. The programme should take into account these new responsibilities;

B. Programmes on leadership capacity development should take into account present and potential needs, and should include the diversity of responsibilities. The programme should prepare for new leadership and should be adapted to the new profile of a successful good leader.

C. Leadership development programmes should concern not only present leaders but also future leaders. Short and long term actions should be envisaged to build leadership capacity at various levels in order to guaranty leadership continuity and succession.

From this survey, we learn that Ministries of Public Service are heavily involved in the process of development. They participate in human resource management as well as in labour regulations and institutional reforms. Ministers of Public Service and senior administrative staff are confronted with various challenges which require from them proven capacities and competence. Unfortunately, very few of these decision and policy makers have had the opportunity of participating in a leadership development programme. The desire for improving quality and skills in leadership is very high. Developing programmes in public sector leadership capacity development is therefore a response to expressed needs of African leaders. However, particular efforts should be made to adapt the programmes to the reality and context of participants. The programmes should help in resolving practical problems and confronting emerging challenges for social and economic development of the Continent. They should be implemented at national, sub-regional and regional levels, taking into account specific needs of participants.