



AFRICAN MANAGEMENT
DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTES' NETWORK

Human Resource Development in the Public Service: Approaches and Methodologies

Presentation by AMDIN

Prof. Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah, Chairperson: AMDIN

Ms Hanlie van Dyk-Robertson, CEO: AMDIN

“Fundamentally, man is the key to all problems, not money. Funds are valuable only when used by trained, experienced and devoted men and women. Such people, on the other hand, can work miracles even with small resources and draw wealth out of a barren land.”

Dag Hammarskjold,

Secretary General to the UN: 1953 – 1963

Introductory comments

- Historical imbalance between financial resource management and human resource management
- Have made progress during past decade with relentless efforts of inter alia, UNDESA
- However, current economic crises pose a threat of reversing the advances made
- To compromise on HRD at this juncture will be short sighted

Drivers for emphasis on HRD in Africa public service

- Greater demand on public service → developmental state imperatives, larger role for government
- Emphasis on knowledge, intellectual capital, accountability, greater complexity
- Changed structure of public sector
- Socio-economic imperatives
- Domestic and international demands for talent and highly skilled employees – private sector will take from the public sector
- In Africa, public service constitutes a reservoir of intellectual talent and skilled individuals → to be expected that it will be a hunting ground as demographics also drive the world demand labour

Skills pool need to be much larger than current and immediate demands!!!

ROOTS OF THE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

APPROACH

- Historical, ideological and philosophical
- Late 1970s, early 1980s: USA and Western Europe
- Neo-liberal: individualism and managerialism
- Changes in epistemology → post positivism and beyond
- Changes in organisational structure and way of working (ICT)

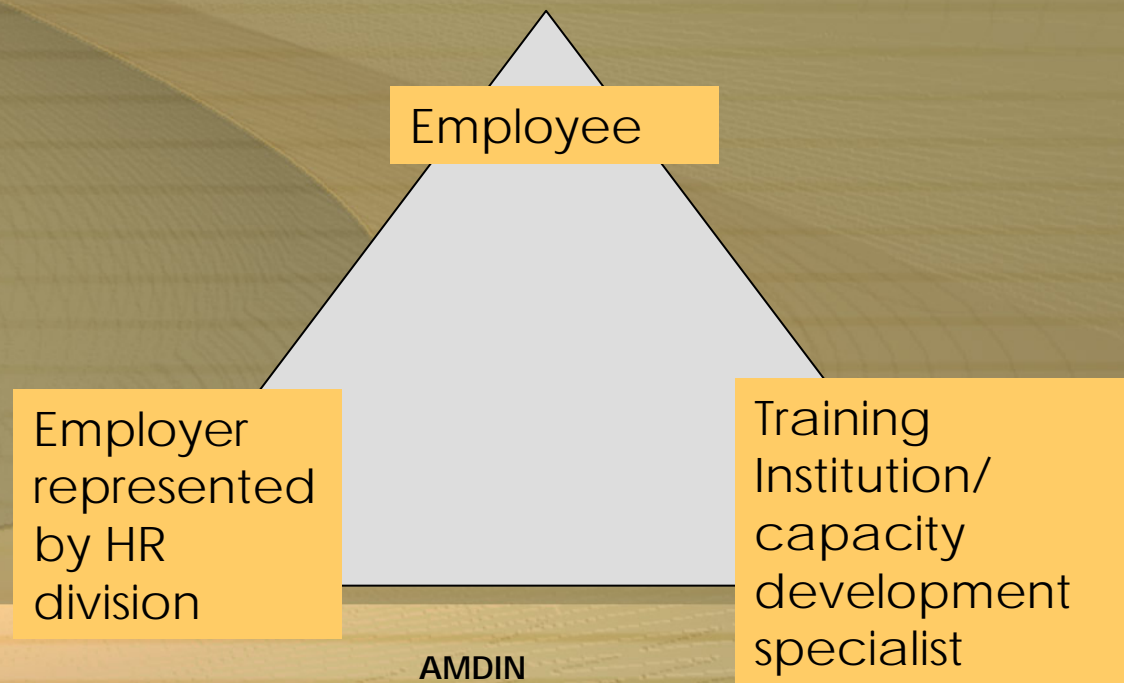
Definitions

- Emphasising the rights of the individual
- Tempered with interests of society; workplace; government
- Aimed at performance improvement and competence formation
- E.g.

HRD "... focuses on theory and practice relating to training, development and learning within organisations, both for individuals and in the context of business strategy and organisational competence formation" (Gourlay, 2000)

HRD in the Public Service

- HRD approach one of the more positive outcomes of NPM
- Broadened perspective on how to achieve organisational and individual learning
- Knowledge management



HRD in the Public Service

- New methods experimented with
 - E-learning
 - Mentoring and coaching
 - Stretch assignments
 - Learning communities
 - Placements and exchange
 - Seminars, study trips, etc.
- **HOWEVER**, ad hoc and mostly in absence of integrated HRM&D policy environment

**Blended
learning**

Strategic orientation of HRD

- Alignment of HRD with government strategy
- Practice is difficult and could be further challenged with emphasis of employee involvement in setting own learning goals
- Need solid performance management systems which contains individual HRD strategies/ plans at appropriate level
- Disconnect between HRM&D and strategic and policy centres in government, ministries and departments
- Ditto MDIs
- Poor needs assessment processes aggravates the effect of the distance between MDIs and "clients"

Training

- Training remains the main HRD approach in the public service (and elsewhere)

“the logic of the centrality of training and capacity building is inescapable” and it argued for the establishment of specialised training institutions that could take care of “the increasing need for the acquisition of specialized skills for the administration of the public service”.

(ECA 2003: 47)

“Just as investment in physical capital is necessary to generate economic growth, so investment in human resources must be recognized not merely as a by-product of economic growth but as a driving force for development..... Technical and professional training lays an essential foundation for the acquisition of skills and for renewing, adapting or changing those skills to better suit the evolving needs of individuals and societies.”

Kofi Annan

Promising signs for Public Service Training

- Agenda of the Conference of Ministers of Public and Civil Service
 - Long term plan and emphasis on Capacity Development
- Draft African Public Service Code
ARTICLE 20: TRAINING
 1. States Parties hereby undertake to put in place a continuing training system in order to improve the efficiency of the administration and to develop the skills and performance of their employees.

Training

Change drives demand for training

“improved public service management skills is as an essential element of any public service reform programme”.

ECA 2003

“It is imperative that learning professionals are involved from the INITIAL PLANNING STAGE of transformation programmes. Learning engages employees in the change process”.

Acadeeme, 2009

Training

- Training does not constitute every aspect of learning and is certainly not the only way to develop human resources but is effectively a sine qua non
 - Workplace learning major other thrust
 - Electronic and mobile learning on the up and shows great potential
- HOWEVER, in large employer surveys it was shown that learners are keenly looking forward to face-to-face training events and are worried that they do not get enough of it as other means of learning increases
- Ninety percent of all corporate education is still classroom-based. E-learning initiatives can be expensive and time-consuming, involving up to 200 hours of development time for one hour of instructional content

Training not only about approach, tool & technique – watch the content

- As a consequence of the continents' colonial history, but in more recent years also the excessive use of consultants and heavy reliance on conditional technical assistance, public administration in Africa is a conglomeration of ideas, initiatives, tools and techniques influenced and underpinned by very different philosophical and normative stances. As such it is often incoherent, or at least plagued by serious internal tensions that hinders effective performance.
- Training is a vehicle of transporting ideas, new models and values

(AMDIN paper to Ministers' conference, 2008)

Importance of collaborative effort and support of newly trained

MDIs are not in control of the environment in which new learning imparted by the MDI will be applied in practice. The point in theory is very clear that unless a base can be established for the transfer of learning between what takes place on a training course and what can be applied within the “sending” organisation’s context any training efforts’ impact is fundamentally compromised.

Schofield 1996: 11

Enormous importance of support by line managers and Ministry HRD specialists once returned from formal training

“The experience within tailored programmes is that client organisations take widely differing approaches to the extent to which they actively try to maximise learning transfer. To take two superficially similar current programmes:

At one end of the spectrum is an organisation that simply nominates participants, collects feedback forms and intervenes no further.

At the opposite end we have a client in which the head of leadership development personally briefs each participant and their line manager, debriefs at the end of a programme, supports each individual in producing a PDP, and engages the board in ensuring that each participant has an assigned board member with whom they can discuss their development and their plans for applying their learning in their part of the business.”

Future trends training

- Driven by developments in ICT:
 - World of Desktop interface (e-learning)
 - Multi-use virtual environment: Simulated environments
 - Ubiquitous computing interface: wireless technology
- 3 major trends for training:
 - Granularity of training
 - Blended learning – integration of different training units
 - Individualisation of learning programmes

Generational issues in training

- Younger folks and incumbent leaders may not learn differently but they do approach learning differently. Younger folks tend to seek knowledge then try it out. Incumbents look for an instruction book. Younger folks also have incredibly high expectations for great jobs, great companies, more opportunity, more money, more fun. And on top of all that, younger folks are far less patient. So, learning must evolve to methods that are more experience-based, more active, more engaging, more relevant.
- There is a bifurcation in the market. Upper-middle level and senior leaders still tend to favour traditional learning methodologies. They do want more customization of learning to their particular needs but 'e' issues are not as important."

Future trend re learning

- Demand is booming, but budgets are bust
- Formal training not the only show in town
- Blended learning
- Learning on the hoof
- Learning to transform organisations
- Leadership and management some of the most prominent areas of organisational learning
- Creating coaching cultures
- Increasing diversity and inclusion
- Evaluation (ROTI)

Conclusion

- Broader, more extended HRD approach embraced on normative level
- Experimenting with new approaches, but still much shortcomings in implementation and integration
- AMDIN supports formation of sister/ fraternal network of HRD practitioners
- MDIs will continue to contribute with respect to MDIs and improvements to realise full intentions of the approach