

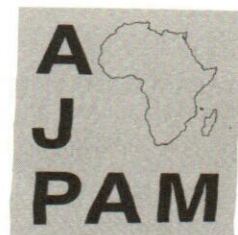


# African Journal of Public Administration and Management

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Vol X, No. 1 • July 1998

African Association for Public Administration  
and Management (AAPAM)



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

AAPAM is very grateful to the Management for Change Programme of CIDA and The Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) for the financial support given to publish this journal.

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**The African Association for  
Public Administration and Management**

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**AFRICAN JOURNAL OF  
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
AND MANAGEMENT**

**ISBN 9966-920-01-3**

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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
AND MANAGEMENT**

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# STRENGTHENING THE MANAGERIAL CAPACITY OF INDIGENOUS NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

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*M. J. Balogun, Gelase Mutahaba and J. N. Ngu*

## **Introduction**

In proposing measures aimed at strengthening the managerial capacity of indigenous non-governmental organizations, we should start by asking why the sudden interest in a strategy which, to all intents and purposes, had earlier been abandoned as impracticable in many African countries. After all, the time was not far in the past when direct government action was seen as the only insurance against economic backwardness and large-scale deprivation. If the argument is that non-governmental organizations now have a vital role to play in the economic recovery and development process, we need to know why that role was formerly under-rated, and what should now be done to prepare the organizations for the challenge ahead.

While it is useful to view the managerial preparedness of NGOs within the context of the challenges to be met, it is necessary to identify the problems which face certain types of NGOs. It is after a clear picture of the African NGOs has emerged that we can proceed, with confidence, to discuss their managerial weaknesses as well as the means of overcoming them.

To assess the magnitude of the challenge facing indigenous NGOs, the first section of this paper examines the factors accounting for the recent shift in official attitude towards private, voluntary action. The second part of the paper identifies the various types of NGOs preparatory to reaching an understanding on the measures needed to tackle their weaknesses. The third section focuses on the policy management weaknesses, while the fourth outlines measures for enhancing the managerial capacity of the NGOs.

## **I. African NGOs: Recent History and the Challenges Ahead**

Until the early 1980s when Africa's socio-economic crisis reached a head, faith in the efficacy of direct government involvement in the development process was very strong. In contrast to this was the relegation of private voluntary action to remote and largely, politically insignificant communities.

It is true that in some countries, private business organizations operated side by side with state enterprises, and non-governmental organizations engaged in development-oriented activities. By and large, however, the central government played a decisive role in formulating macro-economic policy and managing development programmes and projects.

A number of factors account for the relatively low profile maintained by non-governmental organizations vis-a-vis central government bureaucracies in the development process, viz: the ruling elites perception of the challenge of nation-building, bureaucratic empire-building tendencies, and the atrophy of grass-roots, community-action institutions (Balogun, 1988:51-53).

Particularly in the early 60s when many African countries attained independence, the view prevailing in policy circles was that the challenge of rapid modernization could be met and the gains of independence consolidated only if the central government took the lead in economic planning and management. It is possible that this view merely rationalized the political elites' drive for power. At the same time, however, arguments were adduced to buttress the direct intervention logic. As argued by advocates of state intervention, if large-scale industrialization projects were to be undertaken, the resources of all diverse ethnic groups would have to be pooled, and a bureaucracy capable of executing such complex projects would need to be established. In place of the myriad micro-projects administered in the various hamlets without regard to one another, a cluster of national projects would be formulated and integrated in a comprehensive 'national development plan'. That way, plan "distortions" would be minimized, sector linkages fostered, and the entire national resources optimized. It goes without saying that centralization strengthens the hands of political leaders in their dealings with the decentralized units, and the non-governmental groups in society.

Apart from the political attraction of centralized decision-making, the tendency on the part of career officials to wish to preserve (and, at the slightest opportunity, extend) their empires worked against the interest of non-governmental organizations. Central planning almost invariably produced new project ideas which, in turn, frequently entailed the establishment of new organizations and the creation of additional hierarchies of positions. Even where simple administrative logic dictated making use of local institutions and/or resources, central authorities would first impose a project on rural communities, and then deploy a cadre of officials to implement the project - no doubt, at a

higher cost. This is certainly the case with many social welfare and basic-needs projects as well as the bulk of integrated rural development schemes. The bureaucratic empire-building tendency has manifested itself in an extreme form in areas where issues such as those of popular participation, political representation, and accountability were very critical. To cite a few examples: government officials have been posted to serve as sole administrators of local government in lieu of elected councils, or to coordinate/supervise the activities of cooperative societies, district development agencies, and self-help or special interest groups.

But if the power-drives of national political and bureaucratic elites reduced the scope for private action in the development process, the withering away of community-based institutions provided yet another justification for reinforcing central government presence in the various sectors. The centralizing elites' prophesy that local community institutions would not be equal to the task of 'modernization' soon began to fulfil itself as these institutions, overawed by central government power and dazzled by the promise of rapid modernization, succumbed to neglect. Again, a few illustrations will suffice. Shortly before Nigeria's independence in 1960, the cocoa farmers of the then Western Region were organized into powerful cooperatives which mobilized private savings and made substantial contributions to the regional government's development programme. The same cooperative spirit influenced the formation of 'esusu' or 'anko' clubs which were essentially private, voluntary associations administering revolving loans schemes from members' contributions. Monies so advanced were expended on miscellaneous projects, among them, construction of private dwellings, funerals, weddings, and purchase of ceremonial dresses. At the community level, craft guilds, age-grades and village improvement associations sponsored or participated in different communal projects. The traditional practice of 'aro', for its own part, required an individual member of the community to provide reciprocal assistance to other members undertaking construction projects or repair work. If all else failed, the extended family stepped in to assist distressed members and to provide the modern-day equivalent of death and sickness benefits.

The modernizing tendencies of the post-independence period undermined the communal spirit of the African traditional society. In place of small cooperatives and **esusu** clubs, sprawling bureaucratic empires (e.g. marketing boards and development corporations) were established to allocate resources. Community or voluntary agency schools were overwhelmed with central

government regulations if not disbanded to make room for government-administered educational establishments. The small-scale rural schemes handled by the widely dispersed village improvement associations quickly retreated in the face of the better-funded and more prestigious central government projects.

The expansion in the scope of government at the expense of non-governmental bodies continued for approximately two decades. The First and the Second Development Decades (1960s and 1970s) certainly witnessed the expansion of government on nearly all fronts. The economic down-turn observable in the early 80s changed the situation and challenged the rationale for massive government intervention in socio-economic activity.

### **Impact of the Socio-economic Crisis**

The seeds of Africa's socio-economic crisis have, according to some observers, been sown over a long period. However, the severity of the crisis became apparent only in the early 1980s when, as a result of a combination of external and domestic factors, many African countries had to embark on structural adjustment reforms to correct short-term external and internal imbalances in the economy.

The scope and overall impact of the reforms are beyond the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, in order to appreciate the nature of the problems which NGOs are likely to face if they decide to accept the challenge of recovery and development, it is necessary to trace the impact of the crisis on certain socio-economic services.

Both the ECA and UNICEF have been active in bringing to the attention of the world, the effect of structural adjustment on economic activity and on social programmes in Africa. The UNICEF, in particular, sponsored cross-cultural research into the impact of structural adjustment in 10 third-world countries. In its widely read publication, *Adjustment with a Human Face*, UNICEF presents the facts as they relate to the conditions of children in the countries covered by the sample survey. The picture that emerged is not a particularly pretty one. According to the UNICEF study, the down-turn in global economic performance in the early 80s compelled the public sector in the developing world to reduce its expenditure by more than 50 per cent. The decline in public spending was even steeper in countries implementing

structural adjustment programmes than in those that were not (Pinstrup-Andersen, *et al.*, 1987). In Africa, the programmes that tended to be **vulnerable** to expenditure cuts are economic, health, and defence. See Table 1.

**Table 1: Government Expenditure Cuts in Africa by Sector, 1979-83**  
(per cent cases in each category)

Sector and Category of Exp. Cut	All Africa (N=16)
<b>General public services</b>	
Vulnerable	38
Protected	25
Highly protected	31
<b>Defence</b>	
Vulnerable	44
Protected	19
Highly protected	38
<b>Education</b>	
Vulnerable	38
Protected	25
Highly protected	38
<b>Health</b>	
Vulnerable	56
Protected	25
Highly protected	19
<b>Economic (a)</b>	
Vulnerable	53
Protected	20
Highly protected	27

NB: (a) includes expenditure on agriculture, fishing, mining, manufacturing, construction, utilities and transport.

\* Totals may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Source: Pinstrup-Andersen *et al.*, op.cit.

While spirited efforts were made by a number of governments in Africa to protect education programmes from budget cuts, evidence that the sector too had fallen on bad times was provided by the retrenchment of teachers in some countries, by the shortage of text-books and teaching equipment, and by the decrepit condition of school buildings.

In many African countries, the collapse of the transport system (reflected in the deteriorating conditions of roads and vehicles, and the escalating cost of fuel and vehicle spare-parts) drastically affected the quality of rural health services. Between 1979 and 1983, per capita expenditure on health fell in 7 out of the 15 countries sampled in Africa. Besides, 5 of the 15 countries reported cuts in education expenditure. While Table 2 provides information on countries with the most severe cuts in GDP on health and education expenditure in early 1980s, Table 3 provides evidence that public expenditure on education and health increased only slightly in the 1990s.

**Table 2: African Countries with most Severe Cuts in Per Capita GDP, and Health and Education Expenditure (annual per cent change)**

Country	Health 1979-1983	Education 1979-1983	GDP 1980-1985
Ghana	-15.8(a)	-9.5(a)	-4.4
Malawi	-9.8(a)	+7.0(a)	-1.0
Sudan	-9.5	-16.8(a)	-2.6
Togo	-7.5	+3.3	-3.7
Liberia	-6.9	-0.6	-7.1
Mauritius	-6.6	-7.7	-
Tunisia	-6.4(a)	-16.6(a)	+1.4

NB:(a) 1979-82

Source: Pinstrup-Andersen, *et al*, *op.cit*.

Because of the severe cuts in the 1980s and the small changes in the 1990s, the marginal growth in investment in these areas are certainly higher in Africa than in other regions of the world. Public sector decisions on health and education spending continue to be inequitable and inefficient (given that private markets in these areas operate imperfectly) thereby making Africa's performance worse than it could be and worse than other regions at similar levels of development. This poor performance is reflected in the low quality of health care and education.

**Table 3: Public Expenditure on Education and Health, 1988-90, 1993-94, By Region**

Region	Public Expenditure (as a % of GNP) 1988-90 on		Public Expenditure (as a % of GNP) 1993-94 on	
	Education	Health	Education	Health
Sub-Saharan Africa	3.4	3.1	5.5	—
Arab States	—	—	—	—
South Asia	3.4	3.2	4.3	2.5(a)
East Asia	2.8	4.23.5—		
Latin America & Caribbean	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.4
Least Developing Countries	3.4	3.7	3.6	—

NB: (a) Data for 1992-1995

Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report 1993, 1997*. New York,  
Oxford University Press.

The drastic cut in public expenditure has had adverse consequences for social development in general, and child welfare, in particular. Thus, after nearly thirty years of progress, child welfare deteriorated in many African countries during the first half of the 80s. Evidence of this could be observed from the decline in nutritional standards, the increase in infant and/or child mortality (or a marked deceleration in the rate of improvement), the rising incidence of communicable diseases, and the general decline in the standard and quality of education.

The UNICEF study, as we can see, focuses mainly on impediments to child welfare. In contrast, the ECA has, in a number of studies, traced the impact of structural adjustment on development programmes and on standards of living in general. It should be further noted that the belt-tightening measures introduced as part of structural adjustment programmes appear to be oblivious to the progressive deterioration in the quality of life in Africa. Whether by accident or design, budget allocations to people-oriented programmes were reduced at a time when living conditions proved most inhospitable. Between 1980 and 1985 in particular, Africa recorded sharp increases in the rate of population growth in contrast to negative economic growth rates.

Population explosion is a problem which combines with other problems to make life in Africa increasingly harsh. The rapid growth in urban population, for one is a disturbing phenomenon. With an annual growth rate of 5 per cent,

Africa's urban population is growing faster than the aggregate. This exposes an increasing number of people to such urbanization hazards as crime, noise and industrial pollution, civil commotion and the break-down of institutions and values which in the traditional society fostered the communal spirit. As demonstrated in Table 4, life expectancy is low in Africa and mortality is high, even in comparison with countries elsewhere at similar income levels. Even the best performers in Africa, such as Kenya, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Lesotho and Namibia have life expectancy no higher than the norm for countries of other continents at the same level, and as is evident, most African countries perform worse than the norm.

**Table 4: Health Indicators in Africa and Comparable Countries 1995**

Countries	GNP Per Capita		Life Expectancy (Years)	Infant Mortality Rates	
	Dollar 1995	Avg Ann Growth		1970	1995
Mozambique	80	3.6	47	171	146
Tanzania	120	1.0	51	129	84
Ethiopia	100	-0.3	49	159	117
Sierra-Leone	180	-3.6	39	197	164
Burundi	160	-1.3	50	138	102
Uganda	240	2.7	42	117	114
Malawi	170	-0.7	43	193	142
Chad	180	0.6	48	171	120
Madagascar	230	-2.2	52	181	93
Guinea Bissau	250	2.0	38	185	138
Kenya	280	0.1	58	102	61
Mali	250	0.8	50	204	157
Niger	220	-	47	171	122
Burkina Faso	230	-0.2	49	178	129
Nigeria	260	1.2	53	114	83
Togo	310	-2.7	56	134	83
Gambia	320	-	46	185	130
Zambia	400	-0.8	46	106	103
C. African Rep.	340	-2.4	48	139	101
Benin	370	-0.3	50	146	85
Ghana	390	1.4	59	111	79
Guinea	550	1.4	44	181	132
Mauritania	460	0.5	51	148	99
Zimbabwe	540	-0.6	57	96	67
Cameroon	650	-6.6	57	104	89
Cote d'Ivoire	660	-	55	135	91
Lesotho	770	1.2	61	134	77
Namibia	2,000	2.9	59	118	59

*continued*

**Table 4: Health Indicators in Africa and Comparable Countries 1995**

Countries	GNP Per Capita		Life Expectancy (Years)	Infant Mortality Rates	
	Dollar 1995	Avg Ann Growth		1970	1995
Non-African					
Vietnam	240	-	68	111	41
Nepal	200	2.4	55	157	96
Bangladesh	240	2.1	58	140	106
Laos	350	2.7	52	146	95
India	340	3.2	62	137	80
Albania	670	-	73	66	29
Pakistan	460	1.2	60	142	88
China	620	8.3	69	69	30
Srilanka	700	2.6	72	197	164

Notes: The quality of data is likely to vary across countries, depending on frequency of census and demographic surveys.

Source: World Bank *World Development Report 1997*, New York, Oxford University Press.

If the economic environment is stable, the threats to social security would probably be manageable. However, as pointed out earlier, Africa's economic crisis and the policy of structural adjustment which was designed to contain it (the crisis) have removed whatever economic solace a socially up-rooted or traumatized person might wish to look for. To put it in plain language, economic opportunities in the short-term are shrinking, and the outlook in the long-term does not appear to be particularly bright. Aspects of structural adjustment programmes have worsened the plight of many people by compelling the public and the private sectors to retrench their employees and to cut back on employment-generating programmes. In a study, Jan Vandermoortele (1990:32) shows that despite the substantial drop in labour costs, the rate of employment fell significantly in Africa since the early 1980s. In fourteen countries studied by Vandermoortele, the average rate of increase in employment slowed down from 2.8 per cent per annum in the period 1975-80 to 1.0 per cent between 1980 and 1985. The decline was steeper in the industrial sector where employment growth fell from 2.6 per cent in 1975/80 to 0.1 per cent per year in 1980/85. In the mid 1990s, the employment situation in Africa continued to be grim in most countries with urban unemployment rates estimated to be in the 15-20 per cent range, under employment rates in the 25-50 per cent range, youth unemployment rates in the 25-40 per cent range and women's unemployment at twice the national average (ILO, 1997:10). (See Table 5)

**Table 5: Scale of Public Sector Retrenchments in Selected African Countries 1980s and 1990s**

Country	Numbers Retrenched	% of Total Public Sector	Period
Togo	5,000	10%	83-85
Ghana	49,873(f)	15%	87-91
Cote d'Ivoire	15,000	15%	83-90
Cameroon	47,639	20%	85/86 - 91/92
Nigeria	156,550	20%	84-88
Guinea	40,000	20%	86-91
Gambia	NA	17%	85-86
Uganda	80,000(a)	26%	91-94
Kenya	149,000(b)	30%(c)	92-97
Tanzania	80,000(d)	30%(e)	92/93 - 94/95
Ethiopia	80,000	14.8%	92-95
Zimbabwe	123,000	25%	90/91 - 94/95

Notes (a) Official estimates are 30,000 from established civil services, 30,000 from temporary staff and about 20,000 from parastatals.

(b) Excludes retrenchments from the Teachers Service Commission.

(c) 30% is official target proposed for the Civil Service, and parastatals.

(d) Official retrenchment figure is 50,000 for the Civil Service but 30,000 estimate for parastatals is added.

(e) 30% refers to part of the civil service to be affected by retrenchment and excludes teaching, police, prison, and health professions.

(f) Figure does not include parastatals; refers only to Civil and Ghana Education Service. The total percentage for the public sector retrenchees should be in excess of 20%.

Source: ILO/JASPA African Employment Report 1992, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1992, Table 2.1, p. 51.

As pointed out in the ILO/JASPA African Employment Report for 1992, the scale of public retrenchment in the first half of the 1990s was higher than in the 1980s. Most of the countries involved have targets for retrenchment in the range of 26-30 per cent of total public employment. These retrenchments were planned to be implemented in a labour market that was more saturated than in the 1980s. As should be noted in the case of Zimbabwe and Ethiopia, a factor that increased the scale of retrenchment was the need to demobilize the armed forces following the end of civil conflicts.

If the African economy poses a formidable challenge, so does the socio-political environment. As a result of a combination of factors (among them, natural calamities, lack of consensus on how to resolve issues of national integration and wealth distribution, lack of popular involvement in the political process, and flagrant violation of human rights) the political system inherited from colonial regimes have been subjected to various types of 'disturbances'. Simple political differences have exploded into riots, ethnic massacres, and large-scale military confrontations. As a consequence of this, the refugee population has increased. From an estimate of 800,000 in 1969, the number of refugees rose to approximately 4 million by the end of the 1970s (UNHCR, 1997). Recent statistics indicate there were slightly more than 13 million refugees worldwide in 1997. Of this number, over 4 million refugees were in Africa. A disproportionate share of them was concentrated in the Horn of Africa, which accounted for over 1 million refugees. The problem of internal displacement is even more colossal.

We have so far concentrated on the challenges awaiting the indigenous NGOs should they decide to become active partners in the struggle against economic decline and social distress. The next section looks at the range of possibilities available to tackle the various problems through indigenous NGOs.

## II. Indigenous NGOs: A Critical Assessment

One question which remains to be answered is whether the indigenous NGOs are up to the challenge already described. Some observers have even expressed doubts as to whether NGOs in general are the appropriate weapons to deploy in the battle against socio-economic decay.

It is true that Africa's socio-economic crisis, and the apparent failure of formal state institutions to stem the crisis, have raised the profile of NGOs. Yet, the new reputation is, according to some commentators, not well deserved. Michael Bratton (1989a), for example, argues that their current popularity

*"has arisen by default - as a response to the shortcomings of State interventions - rather than from a systematic review of concrete accomplishments. Enthusiasm for NGO approaches must be tempered by the recognition that the organized voluntary sector in Africa is still extremely **weak and dependent**, even when compared with other third world countries."* (emphasis ours, MJB/GM/JNN)

For non-governmental organizations to earn the respect they currently enjoy, they should endeavour to fulfil a number of conditions - viz. they must (a) be autonomous in thought and action; (b) lay claim to independent resource base; (c) be capable of maintaining healthy relations with government, the private sector and donor agencies; (d) be responsive to the needs of the target groups while remaining accountable for the use of resources; (e) be organizationally flexible; and (f) be administered along sound management lines while remaining non-profit-making (Kane, 1987).

### **Autonomy of thought and action**

There is no doubt that some indigenous NGOs meet some of these conditions. However, the bulk of them still have a long way to go to be acknowledged as genuine instruments of voluntary action.

On the surface, the majority of the NGOs would appear to be founded on some original thinking. However, in the process of implementing their ideas, they are likely to be diverted by powerful forces beyond their control. In terms of orientation and action, the African NGOs cover a wide spectrum - from the Christian, Islamic and other religious organizations "whose ministries increasingly address secular as well as spiritual concerns (Bratton, 1989b)," through the crafts and professional associations, to ethnic solidarity/improvement unions, and the marketing/producers' cooperatives. As Sibongile Jamela (1987) points out, many of these NGOs, "like the modern African Christian churches are a result of externally based impetus". Those that are not organized by, or patterned after, foreign institutions may themselves be directly controlled by the government. For example, "Umuganda" is a Rwandan traditional approach to community development, but participation in it was compulsory rather than voluntary.

There is no doubt that a few NGOs are truly indigenous. For example, in Kenya, the idea of self-help has taken firm roots. Popularly referred to as **harambees**, this strategy of grass-roots development serves as:

*"... a major arena of rural politics and has shaped the structure of peasant-state relations in that country (Kenya)" (Barkan and Holmquist, 1989:359).*

Over 90 per cent of the rural populace participate in the activities of the approximately 20,000 community development organizations scattered all over Kenya.

NGOs are also very active in Namibia, particularly in the northern part which bore the brunt of the war of national liberation. And in countries where the political environment is congenial, professional associations, such as those catering for the interest of teachers, medical and legal practitioners have influenced the policy process and operated as fairly autonomous bodies. In others where "associational life" is constrained by unmanageable confrontations, and/or brutal suppression of dissent, the scope for voluntary action tends to be greatly diminished.

It is necessary to add that even where the restraining hand of the government is absent, African NGOs have not been noted for original and independent thinking. One would have expected their think-tanks and policy analysis units (if they have any) to focus on the on-going socio-economic crisis with a view to re-assessing their roles and strategies. In specific terms, the African NGOs, instead of serving merely as conduits for external donor assistance, should be in a position to develop needs-based programmes in the areas of health, education, the preservation of the environment, rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons, and general poverty alleviation. The churches and the mosques constantly exhort the faithful to love their neighbours and to give to charity "till it hurts", but the religious ministries do not seem to have a clearly defined institutional framework for the disbursement of their daily collections on the crippled, the aged, the homeless, and the temporarily out-of-work. What we sometimes see is the curious mixture of ecumenical work with business and fund-raising activities. In this respect, the institution of **Zakat** as enjoined upon Muslims in the Holy Qur'an and officially sanctioned in some Islamic states would need to be further explored with a view to its adaptation in other communities. It is sad that even some Muslim societies have failed to provide adequate institutional mechanism for **Zakat** collection. Perhaps they need to be reminded about their obligations. The Qur'an conveys the message in plain language:

*"Hast thou observed him who belittles religion? That is he who repelleth the orphan, and urgeth not the feeding of the needy. Ah, woe unto worshippers who are heedless of their prayers, who would be seen at worship, yet refrain from deeds of mercy!" (Quran 107, 1-7).*

## Financial independence

Closely tied to the autonomy of thought and action is the concept of financial independence. With the possible exception of a few countries in which the tradition of self-help is deep-rooted (e.g. Kenya) or where professional associations can count on the support of their relatively well-to-do members (the bar and medical associations readily come to mind) many of the African NGOs owe their existence and operational activities to the generosity of foreign (mostly, Northern) NGOs and/or donor agencies. An observer, (Sibongile, 1987), puts it poignantly:

*"I am well familiar with the popular pastime of donor-bashing but, if truth be told, many of Africa's NGOs exist only to the extent there is a donor somewhere to fund their activities".*

Another commentator (Kane, 1987) sums up the consequences of dependence. According to him, some southern (and definitely many African) NGOs,

*"are simply... a branch or excrescence of a Northern NGO. As an 'affiliate' of 'affiliated' branch, they 'execute' orders, directions and instructions received from the head office. Others, although established on an autonomous basis, soon find themselves unable to operate due to lack of ... material and financial resources."*

## Relations with the environment

Developing an independent resource base is a function partly of the resource mobilization capacity of each NGO, and partly of how the tricky question of the linkage with the immediate environment is handled. Within the domestic environment the key actors that NGOs would have to relate to are the government, the organized and informal private sector, fellow NGOs and the clients.

Of all the relationships, perhaps the most difficult is with the government. On the one hand, where NGOs find themselves in an adversary and confrontational role with a combat-ready regime, their resources are likely to be dissipated on battles for survival - that is, if their leaders escape stiff prison sentences or other types of official harassment. On the other hand, if an NGO

is weak and submissive, it would sooner or later end up as an arm of the government - too feeble to pursue an independent course of action, and bureaucratized enough to recycle official propaganda on the state of its clients. In place of the two polar extremes (examples of which are many in Africa) there is need for NGOs which are willing and able to complement the development efforts of government while preserving their cherished ideals as well as corporate integrity.

An equally useful (sometimes profitable) relationship to develop is that with the private sector. Unfortunately, African NGOs are yet to turn their full attention to the sector. Even when toxic wastes were being dumped in different parts of Africa, it took the whistle blown by some Northern NGOs to sensitize the people and the African NGOs to the risks. And even when the private sector needed to be reminded about its "social responsibility" in an era of structural adjustment and economic decline, the NGOs made little effort to approach the sector with a view to designing relief measures for the victims of industrial retrenchments.

Collaboration and competition among NGOs represent yet another form of linkage capable of influencing their effectiveness. The overall impact of particular classes of NGOs tend to be considerably reduced because their activities conflict and overlap with one another. Instead of collaborating in the design and implementation of large and medium-scale projects, some of the NGOs prefer to embark on their individual micro-projects unmindful of what others are doing. Apart from the proliferation of certain types of NGOs (e.g. relief and rehabilitation NGOs) and their concentration within specific regions or geographical areas, an ethnic improvement union may expend its resources on a town hall while another is looking desperately for cash to finance an employment counselling scheme in the same locality. This raises the question of the linkages with the clients and the extent to which their needs are ascertained before resources are committed.

### **Responsiveness and accountability**

One possible reason state intervention proved largely unsuccessful in Africa is the paternalistic attitude of central political and administrative elites. Rather than ask the citizens what they wanted, the rulers almost invariably gave them what they (the citizens) "needed". This runs counter to the concept of popular participation, and by inference, to that of sustainable development. As the late Claude Ake (1990) rightly argued:

*"We cannot significantly advance the development of Africa unless we take African societies seriously as they are, not as they ought to be or even as they might be; that sustainable development is never going to occur unless we build on the indigenous..."*

The sad part is that the African NGOs are in danger of repeating the costly mistakes attributed to unresponsive central planning and implementation strategy. Like the African public services of the 1960s and 1970s, the NGOs risk giving their clients what they believed the latter needed rather than a cluster of programmes which are jointly developed from the beginning to the end. This may be due to the NGOs' inability to reconcile the need for responsiveness to the target populations with the demand for accountability to the financiers or donor-agencies. Another possible explanation is the failure of the NGOs to sensitize themselves (through research) to the genuine needs and aspirations of the publics they serve. Contrary to popular speculation, the top-down approach frequently adopted by the African NGOs is informed not by a feeling of intellectual superiority but by plain ignorance of what to do and where to turn to make an impact.

### **Organizational flexibility**

By organizational flexibility is meant a clearly defined structure of action and inter-personal relationships which is neither too loose nor too rigid; not too casual and unpredictable or too formal and bureaucratized. It is organizational flexibility which enables specific goals to be pursued and programmes to be executed without closing the options for change in policy and procedures.

Using this yardstick, the African NGOs again emerge as a bewildering assortment of animals. They include organizations which exist only on paper or in the imagination of self-appointed office-bearers, organizations characterized by shifting loyalties and frequent leadership tussles or factional in-fighting, and the highly bureaucratized institutions with local federated offices and far-flung international connections.

A 1984 study (Gorman, 1984) identifies three categories of NGOs. The first,

*"... consists of no more than labels. At the international level, there are organizations which use their independent non-governmental*

*status only to work for either governments or for uncontrolled private organizations and TNCs with dubious vested interests. At the national level, these 'NGOs' are either phoney offices created by business-minded charlatans for the sole purpose of extorting their stake in the development funds' pie ..."*

Need one say more about the first category? As regard the second, they are mainly NGOs that specialize in community development services. They are close to the grass-roots and are, as such, in tune with local cultural realities. However, they tend to operate by rote thus missing the opportunities which innovative and entrepreneurial approaches present.

The third group of NGOs are the active ones closely linked with grass-roots movements. Their basic difference with others is that,

*"They do not claim to 'develop' or 'educate' the population ... In short, they try to organize themselves mainly with a view to responding to what the grass-roots want ..."*(Gorman, 1987)

In addition to the preceding, there is another variety of organizational forms. Particularly among the village improvement associations and religious bodies, the structures range from the tight, through the not-so-tight, to the fluky. The church councils and the **ulmas' majlis** belong to the first category, the local church or mosque management committees to the second, and the ethnic solidarity unions and youth clubs to the third. The last two organizational frameworks tend to invite conflicts over goals and strategies and, at times, over the distribution of leadership posts.

While on this, we should not forget to mention the role of one-man NGOs. In some countries, immensely wealthy individuals as a matter of routine spend large sums of money on charity or other worthy causes. If only they had the support of a well-organized institution, their efforts would yield greater dividends than is currently the case.

This indeed is the clue to the problems discussed in the preceding paragraphs. It is the key which, in the right hands, is capable of opening the door of opportunities for African NGOs. In view of the crucial role of management, the whole of the next section focuses attention on it.

### **III. African NGOs: Management Problems and Priorities**

It needs to be emphasized at the outset that management in private voluntary organizations is not exactly what it is in government or business organizations. It straddles the experience and practices in both sectors. An NGO worthy of the label is in the field to offer a service rather than to make a profit. To that extent, a pure balance-sheet orientation is inappropriate in managing the affairs of an NGO. By the same token, the career expectations of its employees must essentially be different from those looking for jobs at IBM, Mitsubishi or Ethiopian Airlines.

But if an NGO and its personnel are motivated by service rather than material benefits, neither the organization nor any of its employee can ignore the fact that service costs money. Therefore, management in NGOs must be concerned with how resources are allocated, for what purpose, and with what results.

So much for the broad conceptual issues. The space within which to apply management skills coincides with the boundary already delineated in the previous section. Specifically, management would have to address the issues of autonomy of thought and action, financial independence and sustainability, relations with the environment, responsiveness and accountability, organizational flexibility, and management style.

#### **Policy direction and governance**

The issue of autonomy of thought and action is essentially one of deciding on where each NGO should be headed and on who should be trusted with the tasks of directing its affairs. The first question will be answered as soon as the objectives and guiding principles are proclaimed. If they turn out to be a replica or a rehash of an external donor agency's development or humanitarian philosophy, or, for that matter, a duplication of an on-going government programme, they cannot claim to be indigenous to the environment of service, neither can they sustain the pretence to originality. If, however, the philosophy underlying the activities of an NGO derives from an empirical study of problems and careful assessment of clients' needs (with the active involvement of the clients in the assessment process), the first part of the condition (autonomy of thought) is said to be fulfilled.

Fulfilling the second part (autonomy of action) requires that the beneficiaries elect/select from among themselves a group of dedicated and competent

individuals to serve as a board of trustees/administrators/directors/governors. It is to this board (howsoever finally designated) that the membership would look for leadership, for ideas about how to meet on-going challenges and how to weather future storms, and for insurance against diversionary or disruptive tendencies.

### **Resource mobilization**

The second management priority (closely related to the first) is the development of the African NGOs' resource mobilization capacity. The capacity to design projects must go hand in hand with that of how to fund (and sustain) the projects. While for some time to come some of the NGOs would continue to rely on foreign sources of finance, the time is ripe to disseminate the gospel of self-reliance within the circles of the indigenous NGOs. The externally dependent ones among them need to be quickly weaned off and made to walk on their own feet. They should further be encouraged to learn from the experience of indigenous institutions with a track record in domestic resource mobilization and self-sustenance. Above all, they should tap all possible sources, including the declared profits of the multi-national corporations and the unspent balances accruing from the one-man NGOs!

### **External relations management**

While the board of directors have a vital role to play in steering the ship of the NGO on rough seas, it is the basic task of the career administrators to manage day-to-day external relations. Without compromising the goals and ideals of their organizations, these officials should lose no opportunity to upgrade their competence in diplomatic negotiations, the use of (clear but inoffensive) language in official correspondence, public and press relations techniques.

### **Mechanisms for client responsiveness and accountability**

As indicated in the previous section, it is sometimes difficult to balance the choices of local communities with the donors' programme priorities. Where the former attach great importance to a particular scheme (e.g. assistance to destitutes and street beggars) the latter might be interested in an entirely different project. Besides, when it is time to assess the impact of donor-assisted projects, the yardsticks favoured by the beneficiaries might differ from those applied by the auditors appointed by the donors.

To resolve the differences between responsiveness to clients' preferences and accountability for the use of resources, the career administrators and project staff need to involve (at the needs assessment and project design stages) not only the intended beneficiaries but also the financiers. Once a consensus is reached at these early stages on project performance indicators, the divergent claims would be reconciled at the impact assessment stage.

## **Organization design and development**

Tackling the problems outlined in the preceding paragraphs requires designing a network of formal and interpersonal relationships — one which leaves no room for role confusion but which is dynamic enough to anticipate and/or respond to environmental demands. One major constraint on the effectiveness of the indigenous NGOs is their tendency either to proceed without a clearly defined organizational framework (e.g. the tribal caucuses or one-man NGOs) or with a framework that is too rigid and allows little scope for innovation. If African NGOs are to make a lasting impact, their organizational structure must be both dependable and creative. Organization designs must be constantly revisited and re-dynamized.

## **Management improvement**

It is not only the organizational forms which need to be reviewed from time to time. The management skills and techniques applied in running the affairs of the NGOs have to be improved. In addition to the general management skills of leadership, decision-making, budgeting, conflict resolution and communication, the key personnel need to be exposed to specialized management techniques such as those of policy analysis, project analysis and planning, aid negotiation, resource mobilization and allocation, and operations on logistics management. The last (operations research and management) research is particularly essential for those responsible for designing the logistics of resettling and rehabilitating large numbers of refugees, and coordinating the use of a variety of human and material resources.

It is also advisable for the NGOs' top management teams to ensure that the structure adopted at any point in time conforms with that of successful business enterprises (Sanwal, 1989:9). This means organizing the activities of each as to NGO in a way that allows the following characteristics to prevail:

- (a) a bias towards action (rather than protocol and red-tapism);
- (b) simple form and lean staff (organizational flexibility and manageability);
- (c) constant touch with customers at the grass-roots level;
- (d) productivity improvement via consensus;
- (e) operational autonomy (to encourage innovative and entrepreneurial approaches);
- (f) stress on one key service or contribution (poverty relief? resettlement of refugees? defence of human rights?)
- (g) concentration on doing what the NGO knows how to do best;
- (h) simultaneous loose/tight controls (Peters and Waterman, 1982)

#### **IV. Enhancing the Policy Management Capacity of Indigenous NGOs: a Summation**

One lesson that comes out clearly from this paper is that to strengthen the management capacity of the indigenous NGOs, it is necessary to go beyond management. Specifically, it is essential to outline the conditions under which truly indigenous NGOs could emerge and make meaningful contributions to the alleviation of socio-economic distress on the African continent. There is no doubt that effective management has an important role to play in facilitating the emergence of the conditions. This is precisely the reason for focusing not only on the managerial problems and priorities but also on the needed responses.

However, it is not enough to identify the basic managerial challenges facing the African NGOs, and it is far from adequate to suggest concepts and techniques which might assist in conquering the challenges. For the suggestions offered in this paper to make a definite impact by encouraging the evolution of an inward-oriented strategy of voluntary action, it is essential that the modalities for implementing the suggestions be outlined. As we see it, enhancing the policy management capacity of the African NGOs will entail embarking on a three-point action programmes, viz.:

- (i) research and consultancy (to upgrade the policy and organizational capability of indigenous NGOs);
- (ii) infrastructure and institutional support;
- (iii) manpower development and training.

## **Research and Consultancy**

It is not known how many of the local NGOs have their own policy analysis units. However, the lack of originality in the current approach by the NGOs to contemporary socio-economic problems stems largely from their failure to undertake policy oriented research prior to embarking on their various projects. Pending the establishment of in-house research units by the NGOs, it is incumbent upon those wishing to encourage "associational life" in Africa to place their services at the disposal of the NGOs. Research and consultancy assistance should cover not only an in-depth analysis of the dominant socio-economic issues, but a clear demarcation of areas within which NGOs could make useful contributions. An empirical study or analysis carried out should be supplemented with proposals for the incorporation of an NGO or the substantial restructuring of an existing one. The main organizational, managerial, and budgeting problems should be anticipated and workable solutions proffered.

## **Infrastructural and institutional facility**

In addition to research and consultancy support (expected mainly from research agencies and institutions of higher learning) indigenous NGOs need the assistance of established institutions during the 'teething' period. Examples of the infrastructural facility required by the NGOs at the early stages of their existence are provision of office space, administration of variants of the "check-off" system (e.g. government organizations might assist 'esusu' clubs or workers' cooperatives to collect membership dues from monthly salaries), and provision of technical and financial assistance. To ensure that dependence on local institutional support is not habit-forming (as it seems to be with external dependence) a target date must be set for the toddler-NGO to be on its feet.

## **Human capacity building**

It does not appear that management training institutions in Africa, as yet, have tailor-made programmes for NGOs. However, as pointed out in the previous section, the staff of the NGOs need to be exposed to training in a number of areas, e.g. general management, analysis of macro-economic policy, project analysis, resource mobilization and management, operations management and aid negotiation, and community relations.

## Conclusion

After providing a critical assessment of indigenous African NGOs in the context of the socio-economic crisis that the continent is facing, we believe that the peoples organizations and NGOs are, and will remain in the foreseeable future, in the fore front of the clamour for the popular participation in development and for building sustainable and equitable societies. NGOs will remain important actors needed to give a human face to future development efforts and to continue to soften the blow delivered to vulnerable groups during this trying period of adjustment and recovery.

As is obvious in this paper, we have noted that current global trends (and the economic crisis) are changing the context in which the indigenous NGOs work. Few have thought strategically about how factors beyond their control now shaping livelihoods, welfare and security, might demand radical changes in building and strengthening their managerial capacity. The paper's humble contribution lies in focusing the NGOs' attention to a few critical challenges and the strategic choices that need to be made.

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## BUILDING CRITICAL CAPACITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: MATTERS ARISING

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*Bamidele Olowu*

### Introduction

Capacity refers to the ability of an instrument or machine to produce the intended results. From the colonial times up to and beyond the independence era, capacity building efforts in Africa was focused on the public sector. From the late 1970s, however the focus shifted to the private sector. Only much later, from the early 1990s has it become evident that the development of the private sector was impossible without the enhancement of the public sector.

Today, virtually all the major international development organizations have at least a programme on capacity building in the region. The World Bank has gone furthest in these efforts and has created an African Capacity Building Foundation in Harare, Zimbabwe and is currently working on a request of the African Governors of the Bank on a fresh set of proposals that could enable it to address the problems of capacity development outside of the financial and economic institutions. Similarly, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa has published a *Framework Agenda for Building and Utilizing Critical Capacities in Africa* (1996a) and is currently revising this draft for publication, and possible implementation by African member states.

As if not to be outdone, the United Nations Headquarters has also come out with a major document which it is currently circulating for comments on the same subject under the title, 'Capacity Building: Some Conceptual and Operational Issues'. UNDP, WHO and other multilateral development agencies have extensive programmes on capacity building. Jaycox's (1992) challenge that weak institutional capacity was Africa's major problem has become a rallying point. But the interest begs a number of questions which this essay tries to explore.

First, what capacities are being built? And what are its impacts on development? Second, what explains the current interest in capacity building - is this a passing fad or does it represent a genuine paradigm shift in development circles? Thirdly, what are the major problems and dilemmas of capacity building - that might constrain the realisation of success? And finally,

what are the types of strategies that can ensure that the capacities once built would be sustained over time. The last question is particularly pertinent as there is increasing evidence that Africa's capacity seems to be declining in spite of the multitude of international assistance programmes in this area.

## **II. Concept, Components and Case for Capacity Building**

Of the various efforts made to define capacity building by the various international development agencies, the UNECA definition appears the most comprehensive. Its final draft version argues that: "capacity refers to the combined human skills and institutional resources in the private, public and voluntary sectors in a country". It goes on to identify the main components of any capacity building initiative as comprising: human, financial, material resources and management or rule systems. Of these institutional resources, the most critical and paradoxically the most neglected are the application of effective rules. The latter explains why organisations with abundant human, material and financial resources have not been able to impact effectively on their economic environment.

This definition has several important features. First, it focuses attention on institutional capacity rather than any of the main components that go into creating that capacity in any institution: materials, men or methods. This is important because of the tendency among many international organisations to equate capacity building with training. As Mamadou Dia has argued, it is pointless to develop the human capacity without developing the capacity of the institutions that would utilise these human capacities over a sustained period of time (Dia, 1996). Second, it focuses attention on all three forms of institutional arenas, rather than only one or a combination of any of them - the public, the private and voluntary sectors.

Thirdly, it underscores the fact the new focus on the capacity of institutions as critical to economic growth and overall development is a reversal of an earlier emphasis in the classical economic literature on the factors of production - land, labour and capital. It is increasingly being acknowledged that the abundance or absence of these economic resources cannot adequately explain economic growth. In fact for some countries, such as Nigeria or Zaire, the abundance of these resources may constitute an obstacle to the development of institutions which must impact positively on the economic environment to produce growth - what is commonly referred to as the 'Dutch disease'. The

economic environment includes the factors of production, the international economic environment, the available productive capacity, physical infrastructures and, most importantly, economic policy. It is the manner in which the variety of institutions in the public, private and voluntary sectors impact severally and cumulatively on the economic environment that produces growth and development.

It is not difficult to understand why capacity building should be important especially in Africa. First, Africa's low and declining institutional capacity is regarded as one of the most important explanations for the continent's lack-luster development performance, the recent modest positive indicators for some countries notwithstanding. In spite of the positive growth rates recorded in the last few years in many countries in the region, majority of countries are as yet unable to tap and utilize their abundant resources to their own advantage. Poor levels of institutional capacity is also thought to be responsible for the low return on technical assistance programmes.

Secondly, several African countries have suffered a deterioration of their capacities as a result of wars and social conflicts. When this is combined with widespread macro-economic distortions, the resultant rapid depreciation of the available capacity becomes inevitable. By building capacity of various institutions, African countries can hope to regain lost ground. Thirdly, the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century presents a number of challenges which require effective institutional capacity. These challenges include: globalization, economic liberalization and competition, democratisation and large scale urbanisation, as well as the rapid spread of new diseases and vices that know no international boundaries - e.g. aids, money laundering, etc.

The institutional focus of this article contrasts sharply with the human and cultural dimension explored by Balogun (1997:70-75). According to him, the best conceived institutional arrangement will come to nothing where the supporting human skills, attitudes and motivation are lacking. This issue will undoubtedly continue to be debated for some time to come.

### **III. Major Capacity Building Initiatives in Africa**

Efforts at building indigenous policy analysis and management capacity in Africa started in the colonial period and were given great impetus by the technical assistance programmes of bilateral and multi-lateral donors as well

as the national development (plan) programmes of the various African governments (see a good review of various efforts up to the mid-1980s in Paul et al 1989). Such assistance programmes were focused on a variety of institutions within the public sector - especially the civil service, the parastate sectors, agriculture and higher/technical education, etc. - even though substantial inputs came from private foundations such as Ford and Rockefeller Foundations as well.

In the late 1970s, the perceived failures of the public sector led to an emphasis on private sector development and a cutback of the state and its institutions. Desperately short of resources to even pay their personnel, most African countries were forced to take on structural adjustment loans whose conditionalities contained the key elements of state cutback and strong support for the private sector.

It took the serious flaws identified during the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) in most countries in the region to force the international community to refocus attention once again on the issue of capacity development in Africa's public sector. I take a long quote from a statement by the then Vice-President of the Africa Region at the World Bank, if only because the World Bank has been leading the charge on the need to refocus energies and attention on capacity building:

During the last three decades, I have seen the emphases in development strategies come and go. These different approaches to African development have all lacked one essential ingredient: **they did not incorporate as a central feature the building of indigenous African capacities: skills, knowledge, and institutions. Capacity building has been the missing link ...** The experience of other parts of the world clearly shows a gradual build-up of their own capacities. Despite political ups and downs, these regions have managed to invest in their human capital and institutions. As a result, they have been able to exercise more control over economic events. Donors supported this kind of capacity building in other regions through substantial and long-term investment strategies. But Africa has been treated differently - and has suffered as a result. In Africa, it has been a case of "crisis management" all along and, with a few exceptions, a "crisis response" by donors through short term, single-shot technical assistance projects ..... if local capacities are not built and sustained in Africa, there is no chance that the continent will develop as it should and as it must if it is to make it in the next century. (Jaycox 1992: 47-48).

This is an extract from the speech with which the World Bank launched the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) to finance its Capacity Building Initiative - in collaboration with a number of multilateral and bilateral donors. The focus of the initiative has been on improving the capacity of economic and financial institutions in Africa. It has focused on Ministries of Economic Planning and Finance, economic training centres and departments of economics in universities and, most importantly, on setting up new, non-governmental economic policy outfits. One of the major outputs of the ACBF is the support it gives to a number of national and regional research and policy organisations, the most notable among the latter being the African Economic Research Consortium in Nairobi.

Important as this initiative is, it suffers from its partial approach and its inability to take into consideration the major issues at the heart of the inability of African countries to sustain capacity.

Since the World Bank has been the most consistent advocate of the need to improve capacity development, I shall use its programmes in the area to illustrate the nature of the problems which capacity building (CB) raises - for donors and for recipients of assistance.

#### **IV. Appraisal of African Capacity Building Initiatives**

Recently, African Governors of the World Bank have made an evaluation of World Bank's capacity building efforts (as an indication of the types of problems which CB faces from the donors' side). They came to the conclusion that The World Bank's activities in this area was part of the problem rather than a part of the solution (World Bank 1996: 33). They summarized the problems of past approaches by the Bank at capacity building:

- (a) Tendency to adopt a short-term, partial and project focused approach instead of a long term, comprehensive and beneficiary-focused approach.
- (b) The manner in which the WB does business in Africa has militated against capacity building. Tendency to seize control of policy making and project design for project preparation and implementation, excessive reliance on expatriate consultants and WB's own staff whose understanding of African conditions are

limited, thus making African further dependent on external support. Officials and consultants are usually subject to internal WB requirements which emphasize speed and quality product rather than the slow and ponderous demands of capacity development initiatives.

- (c) Public expenditure reviews (PERs) do not evaluate capacity development and PERs provide opportunities for minimal involvement or input from the government.
- (d) An insufficient attention in adjustment programmes has been given to the consequences of budgetary restraint on administrative capacity. The result has been a steady decline of real public sector wages and a great damage to the capacity of the public sector to deliver services.
- (e) While criticizing African governments for overstretching itself, WB and other donors identify new areas of policy attention: such as environment, poverty, gender and population, all very important but lead to overloading the responsibilities of these countries for policy analysis and response.
- (f) Economic and sector work are supply-driven and reflect changing preoccupations within the World Bank rather than the concerns of the borrowing countries. There is also a tendency for the WB to monopolize the initiation of studies, coverage, editing and finalizing of the final product.
- (g) The use of lending portfolios, as the WB's predominant operational vehicle, may not necessarily be the best instrument for supporting administrative reform. The competence of the Bank in these areas are of doubtful validity especially as administrative reform requires ad-based consensus and ownership. There is a tendency for the WB to place undue emphasis on private sector development in such areas as legal reform and review of legal codes whereas in actual practice the two domains - the public and private components - are often closely intertwined.
- (h) Much of the technical assistance provided by the WB suffers from the major weaknesses of Technical Assistance (TA) to-date in Africa:
  - substituting for missing or limited capacity, rather than building up the available capacity, thus increasing rather than reducing dependency.

- TA is supply-driven, reflecting the donor's concerns rather than the host country's.
- remuneration scales for TAs dampen morale on public servants in regular employment.
- tendency to serve short-term interests of donors rather than the long-term interests of the country in need, especially as the management of TA is exercised by the donor rather than the host government.

In brief, from the donors' side, capacity building faces two major problems. First, there is the problem of recipient-ownership of CB initiatives ensuring that CB is defined and articulated by recipients rather than the donor, especially given the weaknesses of the capacity of recipients to do this, which was responsible for the need to focus CB in the first instance. In fact, most assistance to countries are provided based on conditionalities unilaterally determined by the donors. This is hardly compatible with recipient ownership. Invariably, CB is donor-driven thus compromising the objectives of the programme.

A second problem is one of priority: donors perceive CB as just one of their programmes or projects rather than an overriding criterion for assessing all programmes - especially because of the severe costs that CB imposes on programme management. CB is not only costly in money terms but in time as well. Hence, it is not surprising that the African governors called for a strategic approach to capacity building which sees capacity building not as an end in itself but as a means to an end, with capacity building being an integral part of the development agenda. They argued for a change in the development paradigm, with the host countries owning and leading indigenous capacity building strategies and processes.

It is doubtful whether these expectations can be realised. The problems are like the same problems that aid management faces in the continent - aid is given to advance a variety of purposes, especially commercial and political, not simply to advance development in the recipient country. Data from the Bank's own research indicates that only 28 per cent of the Bank's projects in the Africa region achieved their objectives in terms of strengthening institutions and that only 23 per cent were likely to produce sustainable capacity building benefits (World Bank 1996b).

Nevertheless, the African governors correctly identified the comprehensive and multivariate nature of CB rather than the partial approach which prevails at present. They highlighted the main areas that they regarded as crucial for capacity development. These include:

- **Public Sector Reform:** Professionalising the civil service; enhancing the capacity for policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation, developing accounting and auditing systems, creating a functioning legal system and creating opportunities for leadership and management development through pre- and in-service training programs.
- In the Private Sector, the focus should be on effective business promotion and development and the strengthening of private sector institutions such as Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other professional associations.
- The capacity of the civil society is to be improved by free exchange of information, improved professional media skills and enhanced capacity of the legislature.
- Finally, there is a focus on education and training: the revitalization of African universities, increased cooperation in higher education leading to the creation of regional centres of excellence and increased investment in higher education.

Important as the proposals, are therefore, they underestimate the fundamental problems that this analysis raises for donors. But they also failed to appreciate the implications for the recipients as well. To genuinely own CB initiatives, they must be able to mobilise a substantial portion of CB requirements. We consider this in some detail below.

### **Capacity Building Problems - from the Recipients' Side**

CB raises three types of problems from the recipients' side. First, CB cannot be effectively addressed without reforms in the mode of governance. There is a need for a readiness to move from monocracy and patrimonial elements associated with that mode of governance to some form of institutional pluralism (Balogun, 1997b). Second, there has to be a recognition of the centrality of public service reform and finally, the recipient must be ready to shoulder a substantial part of the cost of building, rebuilding, mobilising and sustaining capacity.

## Governance Reform

African governmental systems are fraught with several major problems. One of the most serious of these is their weak and declining policy analytical, implementation and review capacity. It is generally understood that this situation is caused largely by the absence of the demand and supply for high and sustained capacity. Yet, without effective policy analysis and management (PAM) capacity, sustainable development is impossible.

On the demand side, the most critical factor is the recognition by the political regime of its need for informed analysis in reaching decisions. Another is the existence of a civil service elite that is capable of recognizing its need for informed analysis and that can encourage policy analysis and serve as mediators or technocratic intermediaries between analysts/specialists and political leaders. Thirdly, the role of an informed and questioning public, including civil society organs, is (critical - they can propose alternatives to government policies. The political opposition, the press, interest groups such as the organized private sector (chambers of commerce, trade unions, etc.) and the academic community can in fact provide an array of policy choices and could increase the demand for policy analysis and management.

All of these is, however, dependent on the readiness of the political regime not only to tolerate but encourage such public participation in the policy process. It also has to give technical and political support to institutions which have a capacity to question the wisdom of several of its own choices.

Perhaps the most striking fact about African governmental and administrative systems is their excessive concentration of power. African countries are centralized formally in several dimensions:

- **Constitutionally** in terms of the relationships between state and society institutions - the latter are repressed and are underdeveloped and are not assigned any formal roles in governance;
- **Institutionally** in terms of the dominance of the executive over all other institutions of government - the judiciary, the legislature, etc.;
- **Financially** in terms of the concentration of public expenditures and (other resources) in the centre compared to weak local authorities;
- **Administratively**, in terms of the relationships between the headquarters offices and the field agencies of the central

government and even between local governments and their constituent communities.

There is also:

- **Economic Centralization** - The tendency to place under the public sector economic activities that could be better undertaken by private sector organizations - a factor responsible for the spate of nationalizations and indigenization legislation until these began to be reversed from the 1980s through full or partial privatization programmes;
- **Poor Delegation within Executive Departments, Ministries and Agencies** - reflected in a situation in which coordinating agencies - usually associated with the Prime Minister's Office or the Presidency insist on carrying out detail operational activities for ministries rather than specialize in strategic policy issues and review.

In the absence of effective policy analysis institutions in-house within government, policy analysis institutions outside the civil service are rarely utilized and are denied essential information on the ground of security considerations. The result is that research and analysis carried out by these institutions are completely delinked from the public policy process (Mutahaba and Balogun, 1992; DPFM, 1996). As a result there is an underdevelopment of policy analysis institutions and knowledge of policy analytic methods is almost non-existent in many African civil services (Moharir 1996).

Several reasons have been given for this high level of centralization - the need for national unity, rapid economic progress, equity, and accountable use of national resources. These explanations are so high-sounding and respectable that even donors unwittingly endorse them. Unfortunately in Africa none of the hopes or expectations from centralization has brought the expected fruits. Rather what exists are counter-intuitive results: wars and civil conflicts which in the case of some countries have led to state-dissolution; economic decline until the recent fortuitous developments noted above; widening inequalities between social and economic groups, inefficient and ineffective government agencies whose ponderous and slow manner of doing business have become proverbial; and institutionalized corruption in several countries, including those operating at the highest levels of the governmental system. (Wunsch & Olowu 1990, 1995.)

Excessive centralization of political and administrative power impacted negatively on the supply side of PAM. Three of these will be mentioned here:

### ***Depressed Incentive Systems***

Public servants' salaries in Africa have been severely eroded over the years. Many officials' monthly take home pay is barely sufficient for one week's existence. This has become one of the strongest propensities to unethical behaviour which several scholars of African public administration have tried to document. (see for instance Robinson, 1990; Rasheed & Olowu, 1993; Adedeji *et. al*, 1995). Besides salaries, the working conditions have deteriorated.

Civil Service Reform (CSR) in Africa has concentrated on short-term containment of the size and cost of the civil service. Unfortunately, this has produced only modest results. CSR in Africa has not succeeded in reversing the decline and demoralization in the civil service as a result of low and declining incentives. Hopes that savings through cost-cutting strategies will be used to finance pay reform has turned out to be unworkable because of the high short-term financial costs of retrenchment (severance payments) not to mention its political costs (Lindauer & Numberg, 1995).

It is, however, paradoxical that all the available statistics show that African countries actually have far less civil servants than any other region of the world. They also spend much less on their civil services than any other region of the world. What is wrong therefore is not the size of the civil service but the inability to pay and keep quality personnel and meritocracy and also the absence of a working system of accounting and accountability, transparency, rule of law - in one word, effective governance.

African civil services are poorly structured in that they have too many junior level personnel that are not required for results and the majority of those who are in the service are in the wrong location: at the headquarters instead of the rural areas, where the mass of the people are to be found. With the exception of a few countries, the majority of civil servants live and work in the headquarters up to 70% or more). This contrasts with a situation in the OECD countries: 70% (France), 75% (UK), 82% (USA) live and work outside their respective capital cities. There is also a fiscal problem - with a disproportionate amount of available resources allocated to defence and security and debt servicing. This leaves very little for social services and

infrastructures or funds to pay competitive salaries (United Nations 1993; Adamolekun 1993).

Even those most closely associated with civil service reform (CSR) in Africa agree that they have been merely tinkering around the edges. (Numberg & Nellis 1995, Sciavo-Champo 1996, Dia 1996). CSR is a long-term issue which requires substantial involvement of the population and the civil servants themselves. It requires more not less resources. It also requires building structures within and outside the civil service to hold it accountable and using some direct forms of accountability such as citizens charters, citizens surveys, complaints and redress mechanisms, etc. Most of these issues imply a wide dispersal of governmental power.

### *Low Investment in Human Development*

High deficits have resulted in a situation in which investment in human development has suffered in many African countries. There is also a preoccupation with defence and security priorities as already noted above. Yet, given the widespread illiteracy and the diseases associated with poverty, it would have been important to target human development as a major investment for economic growth and social change. The capacity built over the years before and after political independence are today in a state of steady decline - marked by the departure of faculty and declining student enrolment rates, the degeneration of teaching infrastructure, etc. The worst hit have been the institutions most critical for capacity development - the higher educational institutions - universities, polytechnics and other tertiary structures.

The experience of the rapidly growing economies underscore the need for massive investment in human resources as a necessary precondition for growth and development. On the other hand, low investment in the human sector initiates a vicious cycle in which poor quality of social services and infrastructure investment, heightens social inequalities, fuels inter-ethnic and religious-based struggle for resources, all of which lead to poor economic performance. This paves the way for authoritarianism and dependency associated with patrimonial rule, further reinforcing declining investment in this sector and economic and social development.

## Poor and/or Non-Use of Locally Available Institutions and Knowledge

The general disdain for indigenous knowledge and institutions is rooted in the colonial era that placed value only on things that are exotic. However, in the post-independence period, this has been carried to new heights of absurdity and several scholars have wondered why the craze for modern technology should have made African leaders and development agents believe that Africa represented a clean state on which new technologies and ideas will thrive (Hyden 1986; Balogun, 1997). In reality, the institutions and values which the people can readily identify with are not regarded as part of the social capital on which development can be built. In a sense, this was necessary in the centralized state. As the gatekeeper of modern impulses, capital as well as soft and hard technology, it was easy to regulate and determine the pace of 'development'.

Recent research, however, indicates that tremendous potential exists in African institutions and knowledge systems which can be tapped for the development challenge. This disconnection between the formal institutional structures transplanted from outside and the informal indigenous structures is regarded as one of the problems underlying economic management and public sector performance (Dia, 1996). Some countries have attempted to enhance the capacity of development institutions through the integration of the formal and informal structures. One of the most recent examples is the role that **kamajors** have played in ensuring community security in Sierra Leone and helping to hasten the end of the rebel war in that country. A similar resort to traditional locally-based institutions was used successfully in Uganda and constitute an important element of the resistance councils which is the basic unit of that country's local government system. Such basic units, dating back to the 16th century constitutes the basis of the local government systems in most West European countries today (Bennett, 1994).

Besides, the well-documented land boards of Botswana and the harambees of Kenya, the Nigerian community banks which were built around communities and tapped on the traditional esusu savings and credit associations is one of the more recent examples (Mabogunje, 1995). In neighbouring Cameroon, these traditional savings schemes have metamorphosed into part of the formal banking system and have become a veritable institutional mechanism for mobilizing resources for a variety of uses in this country (Nchari, 1990). In another important research finding, the WHO discovered that informal institutional

structures constitute important hidden resources which could help to ensure the success of the district-based primary health care system which is designed to ensure the realization of that organization's goal of Health for All by the Year 2000 especially in developing countries (WHO, 1994, Olowu *et.al*, 1991).

Unfortunately, these are scattered examples, and there are definitely others - especially in plant and medicinal research into local herbs, etc. However, for the preponderance of countries in Africa, there is still a fixation on the modern formal structures and the indigenous institutions and knowledge are excluded from the effort to construct and rebuild capacity. For instance, many countries still concentrate on the formal banking systems for the mobilization of financial resources, excluding the informal banking systems. The informal private sector continues to suffer from similar neglect.

Similarly, several countries have attempted to revitalize local governments by insisting on uniform institutional structures irrespective of the local realities. They emphasize the need for large local government areas which are not contiguous with the areas of the subjective sense of community. The result has been situations in which many communities have set up their own institutions which exist parallel to the formal structures often with minimal or no relationships to one another (Olowu, 1989). Few countries have realized the tremendous opportunities which exist for co-production between government agencies on the one hand, and private sector, voluntary agencies, communities and individuals on the other in the provision of a wide variety of services (Ostrom, 1996).

The bias against local ideas and institutions is also responsible for the preference of African governments for external rather local policy institutions and experts. There is also a readiness on the part of African governments to make information about the government available to external actors and institutions rather than indigenous experts and institutions - African leaders plead security concerns as their defence for these preferences.

From this analysis flows the two other conditions for a revitalisation of institutional capacity in African countries.

### **Centrality of Public Service Reform**

In an earlier period, in the bid to press the case for an enhanced place for the private sector, which had been long repressed by many African governments,

the thinking was that all that was needed to be done was to shrink or cut-back on the public sector. But today, most close observers have come round to the conclusion that what is needed is not a weak and ineffective public service but an intelligent, responsive and highly motivated public sector that is capable of making the strategic decisions and leave detail micro-policy and implementation activities to other institutional actors.

Donors have tended to emphasise the need to "down-size" the state and its institutions. Their programmes of reform in the public sector have been dominated by cost considerations rather those of building the appropriate capacity in the public sector (Adedjei, 1992). Increasingly it is becoming evident to all that without an effective and proactive civil service, several of the initiatives for developing the private sector and civil society would be impossible. The World Bank seems to have come to this conclusion for in its latest *World Development Report* (1997:25) it argues that: '*State-dominated development has failed but so will stateless development. Development without an effective state is impossible*'.

A new type of public service reform is therefore required which would tackle the problem of CB in that sector itself. The revitalised public sector must become a willing ally in the activation of the private and civil society sectors. This is a problem since many African countries do not have the capacity to appreciate the enormity of this problem let alone addressing them. Even the new crop of political leadership by and large continues to perceive the private sector and civil society as threats and competitors for power with the political party or movements they represent. In other words, a commitment to pluralism - what I prefer to call polycentricity - is a precondition for effective CB initiatives on the recipient's side.

### **Financing Capacity Building**

Capacity building or better still the mobilisation of available capacity for effective institution building requires heavy investment in financial terms and is a long-term programme. So long as donors are responsible for financing all aspects of the policy agenda on CB, these issues are likely to be beclouded by the donors' agenda. That is why it becomes absolutely essential for African countries to appreciate the facts that CB is costly and that they must come up with a substantial part of these costs.

Some observers have started to question whether in fact what Africa lacks is capacity - in view of the large number of trained individuals working outside the region. The problem, properly defined, is one of capacity mobilisation - how to mobilise available skilled personnel to work in the variety of African institutions - through proper incentives - and how to ensure that materials with which they need to carry out their functions are available (Dia, 1996; Balogun, 1997). This is likely to cost a lot. The ECA has estimated that as much as 30-45% of African countries GDP would need to be devoted to CB issues in the next 10 years if CB is to be effectively mobilised for the various sectors in the region (UNECA 1996a).

The fact of the matter, however, is that most of the African countries can hardly pay the depressed structure of incentives to their public officials. Unfortunately, cutback management has been shown to be just as costly in financial and political terms - so progress has at best been limited if not counter-productive. By the time they deduct debt services and defence and security expenditures, most countries have little left to finance development or even pay for their operational requirements.

The question is how is the cost of CB to be met. Most of the responses to this question to-date turn to the donors - either some form of debt cancellation or targeting of donor or specialized funds to address the problem (see Adedeji et al.1995) It is difficult to be optimistic on whether this approach would advance recipient ownership given the experience to date.

The answer therefore lies in African countries reappraising their development priorities, substantially improving their capacity for policy management and realign incentives within the various institutions to ensure that the appropriate goods and services are produced to stimulate economic growth.

This turns out to be a chicken and egg problem: without a thriving economy African countries are not likely to be able to finance the cost of CB, but it is because they do not have a thriving economy that their available capacity eroded in the past.

## **V. Towards Sustainable Development and Improved Capacity for Public Administration and Management in African Countries**

Many observers have wondered why centralization has been such a disaster in Africa when it has led to spectacular economic success in other developing countries - in East Asia and Latin America. The consensus of opinion is that the existence of diverse institutions within the public and private sectors with capacity to effectively process information, analyse and implement policy have been crucial. The variety of institutions have also helped to train and tame political leaders ensuring that they have some basic understanding of public service and its stringent demands. Besides an ebullient private sector, the civil service systems in these countries are generally perceived (both by the populace and foreign observers) as 'efficient, motivated and professional'.

Several studies have noted that one of the important explanations for the success of these states is the existence of a bureaucracy which is 'powerful, competent and insulated' (Leftwich 1995, Leipziger & Thomas 1993). Such a civil service recognizes the importance of policy analysis and encourages critical policy analysis centres within the government and also outside of the government. Heavy investment especially in education and in basic health services also ensures that there is a steady flow of highly skilled people into the different sectors, with the government able to pick the best through competitive recruitment and salary systems. Political accountability is weak but there is substantial decentralization of political and administrative power. Civil servants not only adopt market-friendly policies but regularly consult the operators in the private sector on economic policy matters, thus acknowledging the need to be accountable to economic entrepreneurs. Similarly, even though the local authority systems may not be fully democratized but they make important decisions and are responsible for a variety of basic services. For instance, in South Korea, local authority are responsible for one-quarter of all public expenditure and one-fifth of public employment (Caiden & Kim 1992).

All of the above lead to important conclusions. What is required in Africa is an attempt to reverse the preoccupation of an earlier era of centralized power and authority in one monocracy, usually the central government's political executive. In its place is the need for the building of as diversity of institutions which some have referred to as creating a polycentric political/administrative order. Within this framework, there would be a wide variety of structures in

the public sector, in the private and non-governmental sectors, at local and national levels with independent policy-analytical capacity and ability to influence the debate on what should constitute the goals of public policy and the most efficacious manner for achieving those goals. Particular institutions to be targeted for capacity building activities will include: Parliaments, the Judiciary (to increase its capacity for conflict resolution at all levels), universities and independent think tanks, local and regional institutions.

All of these institutions cannot be built over night so there must be a sense of prioritization which is bound to vary from one country to another. Nevertheless, it would seem that for many African countries, the most immediate candidates for effective capacity building would be the civil services, micro-enterprises, educational institutions and basic local community governments. All of these structures already exist in some form in each of these countries. In particular, it would be essential to build the capacity of the basic institutions of governance at the community level, using the institutional structures which already exist at the level of every village and community as the basic units. Until these institutions are developed, there can be little hope that either of the goals of economic growth or political liberalization and democratic governance will be attained.

These institutions have a potential, if properly made accountable to their owners to secure for them sufficient level of institutional resources: essential technical resources - skilled personnel with competitive working conditions and essential training, management systems, financial resources, etc. but, also most importantly, with the political resources - autonomy and political space to function and be accountable to their clientele - the public both directly and through the available representative institutions.

In sum, capacity development is directly linked to overall economic growth. To be able to utilise available capacity effectively and add more over time, African countries would need to tackle the following urgent institutional reform issues:

- Develop effective policy making institutions at the national levels. This would mean revitalising the cabinet and the topmost levels of the executive branch. In particular, ministers should have a good idea of the expectations and limitations of providing executive leadership in their various ministries, just as the civil services must

be able to recruit and retain senior officials and professionals, probably on a contract basis, who can help in the formulation of policy (see Adamolekun 1993 for a full development of this idea);

- Encourage the development of a dynamic and effectively regulated private sector. The state sector must understand what it has to do to provide an enabling environment for the public sector.
- Develop strong and community-based local governments in urban and rural areas. Present community organizational units would form the basis of local government reorganization and these institutions must be effectively empowered to provide services devolved from the central government organs, using the financial resources they could muster as the basis for co-production between the central government and the local governments and between local governments and the public (Ostrom, 1996);
- Empower civil society: legislation and other mechanisms should be developed to assist the operation of civil society organs, also the legislature should be strengthened to provide opportunity for the organised civil society to lobby effectively for legislation and to input the policy process;
- Restructure the Public Service - The public service should be restructured to ensure that it is right-sized and that it undertakes responsibilities which no other organisations could discharge. There should also be a substantial devolution of responsibilities and financial resources to local governments. For this to be effective, the central government has to have an effective machinery to monitor the performance of decentralized organs and to provide them with assistance when required.

In the short-to-medium term, African countries will need the assistance of the international community. To this end, capacity development should become the hallmark of development assistance in Africa. Assistance should not only be focused on countries that are reforming their economies and politics but such assistance should be focused on the some commonly defined areas of assistance, such as the ones defined above.

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# CLASSIFICATION AND APPLICATION OF GOVERNMENT'S EXECUTIVE POWERS: A REVIEW OF THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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*Jimmy Chijioke*

## **Introduction**

In this article, government is defined as the structure and system by which decisions and rules are made or determined and enforced for all the citizens (and in some cases, for non-citizens) of a given society. In the broad sense, the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary are all taken as part of government. The three organs have the power to make and enforce decisions, rules, and regulations affecting all members of society. In other words, what distinguishes these institutions from other bodies is the law/rule making and enforcement powers, which are limited in scope and jurisdiction as far as those other bodies are concerned. These other bodies may be trade unions, churches and mosques, social clubs, etc. Their rules and regulations only apply to their members.

As far as the Executive arm of government is concerned, Section 5 of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that:

"... subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the executive powers of the Federation -

- (a) shall be vested in the President and may, subject as aforesaid and to the provisions of any law made by the National Assembly, be exercised by him either directly or through the Vice-President and Ministers of the Government of the Federation or officers in the Public Service of the Federation; and
- (b) shall extend to the execution and maintenance of this Constitution, all laws made by the National Assembly and to all matters with respect to which the National Assembly has for the time being power to make laws ...."

Section 5 of the 1989 Constitution of the Federal Republic contains similar provisions. We are relying on the 1979 Constitution by virtue of Decree No.

107 of 1993 which makes that Constitution supreme or basic law of the land - the *Grund Norm*. This is of course true to the extent that the provisions of the Constitution do not contradict the provisions of Decrees. Under military regimes, the real *Grund Norm* is the Decree and the inconsistency rule upholds the supremacy of Decrees which, as a matter of expediency, have *ouster* clauses.

## I. Government and the State: an Overview

Sometimes, we tend to equate government with the state or use the two terms interchangeably. This may be permitted in everyday communication, but in strict legal terms, government is not the same as the state. Let us define a state as "a community of individuals who are politically organized upon a definite territory: it possesses constitutional or legal independence which is generally free from extended control and which exercises political authority over all the inhabitants in its area." (Dudley, 1982) The major attributes of the state are therefore a population, a territory, a government that is **reasonably** independent from external control. In other words, such government must possess sovereignty and also have the power to make **binding** decisions on all the inhabitants of that state.

The preceding definition implies that the government is therefore the main institution of the state. In a lay man's language, the government is a group of people (elected or unelected) **who are on duty for a specified period of time** to determine and implement or execute certain policies/programmes for the welfare of the citizens and in the larger interests of the nation. This means that the government "comes and goes" while the state remains permanently. This also implies that the interests of the government at a particular time may not necessarily coincide with the broad and long-term interests of the state. It is against this background that we shall classify governmental powers.

## II. Powers of Government

We have seen in the introductory part of this paper that the primary function of government (executive) is to implement the laws validly made by the Legislature (National Assembly). In this context, the Government (Executive) is the President, the Vice-President, Ministers, Special Advisers, Heads of Parastatals and Extra-Ministerial Departments and other public officers. The government's responsibility to implement laws validly made by the National Assembly is not as simple and easy as the picture is painted; — especially

when we recognize the fact that the laws which the government is being called upon to implement deal with the protection of citizens (life and property); promotion of individual and general welfare; provision of essential social services; etc.

In order to fulfil the role assigned to it by the Constitution, the government has to be given certain, and in fact, necessary, powers to perform. These powers are legislative (rule-making); executive/administrative and judicial. To avoid any confusion, let us enter a *caveat* here. The powers of government we are discussing are not the "traditional" powers inherent in the classical doctrine of the separation of powers between the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. In legal literature, it has been found convenient to describe these powers as *quasi-legislative* and *quasi-judicial*. It is assumed that executive and administrative powers belong to the government "as of right", hence no need for quasi-executive or administrative powers.

### **"Legislative" Powers of Government**

In principle and in accordance with the doctrine of separation of powers, the government or the executive does not legislate. However in practice, the government legislates through a number of means, prominent among which is administrative rule-making.

The Legislature convenes, deliberates and passes an enabling law on a specific subject matter. More often than not, the law contains general provisions as the legislature is not in a position to fill in all the details of the law which it could not have foreseen before implementation. The *lacunae* created in the enabling law is to be filled or "made good" by the government (executive) whose duty it is to implement the law. It is during the process of filling in the *lacunae* that the government (executive) makes subsidiary legislation "as it deems fit" to give life and meaning to the law and make its implementation possible and sensible.

Subsidiary legislations by the government, can be in various forms, to wit:

- (i) Rules and Regulations; General Orders;
- (ii) Circulars;

- (iii) Circular Letters;
- (iv) Notes for Guidance;
- (v) Explanatory Notes;
- (vi) Financial Instructions;
- (vii) Guidelines on a number of subjects, including release of warrants; allocations to institutions; Authority to Incur Expenditure (AIE), etc.

In specific organizations, *Office Notices*, *Internal Circulars* and *Memoranda* become binding within the establishments.

In other words, the government "legislates" through this mechanism. In some cases, the government over-steps its bounds by committing *ultra-vires* actions under the guise of delegated or subsidiary legislation, especially when the enabling law gives functionaries of government the power to take "steps as they deem fit". For example, subject to some checks, the President as the Chief Security Officer of the nation can take "all necessary steps as he deems fit to maintain law and order", since it is the responsibility of the government (executive) to maintain law and order.

The security agencies (the Army, Police, the State Security Service, the National Intelligence Agency, etc.) are all creations of the Constitution. Their structure and functions are also spelt out in general terms in the Constitution, but the *General Guidelines* on how they operate are issued by the government (executive) in form of subsidiary legislation. There are specific laws made by the legislature to regulate the powers of the agencies (eg. the Police Act, 1960 and subsequent Decrees, the Nigerian Security Organisation Decree of 1976, etc) but the *modus operandi* is the set of *Guidelines* issued by the government. This of course, has to be the case, especially in areas such as security of the country and its nationals. No country will publish such *Guidelines* for public consumption.

The point we are making here is that governments all over the world do legislate in one form or the other in order to "give life" to a seemingly "lifeless" piece of legislation. Some governments overstep their limits in this area thereby leading to what has become known as one of the symptoms of "excessive government".

One may legitimately ask where does the government convene to "legislate", since it has no legislature. The simple answer is that the government legislates through a number of institutions already created in the Constitution

like the Civil Service Commission, National Defence Council, National Economic Council, National Security Council, Police Service Commission, Federal Electoral Commission (now National Electoral Commission of Nigeria - NECON), etc. When necessary, the government, after approval of the legislature, creates any additional agency it requires for specific assignments. For example, the Failed Banks Tribunal was created by the Failed Banks Decree with the sole aim of sanitising the banking industry. The Rules of Procedures which may be amended (if need be) are more of administrative rules made by the government to guide the conduct of the Tribunal.

### **Pure Executive Powers of Government**

There is no doubt that the Executive is the most powerful arm of the “troika”, i.e. the Legislature, the Executive proper and the Judiciary. When we talk of the executive powers of the government, we are in theory inferring the powers conferred on the executive to implement all laws validly made by the Legislature. This in itself is correct.

However, in practice, the executive powers of the government imply the *mobilisation* of all the resources at the disposal of the government to achieve its objectives. These resources are enormous, and a closer look at their potentials buttresses the thesis that the executive is the most powerful of all the three arms of government. These resources range from human, material and financial resources, to well organised institutions like the armed forces, the police, customs and immigration, crack squads on specific assignments (like the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency or NDLEA) the State Security Service (SSS), the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), the Anti-robbery and Anti-Terrorism Squads of the Nigeria Police Force, the whole complement of the civil/public service. Let us define execution as “the process of performing particular acts, of issuing particular orders, or (as usually) of making decisions which apply general rules to particular cases” (See Report of the British Committee on Ministers’ Powers, 1932). In line with this definition, we can see that execution, as a process of performing particular acts, has a lot of human element in it. In any human endeavour, there must be “rules of conduct” to guide behaviour. It is for this reason that the government “legislates” in form of Circulars, Guidelines, etc. to ensure that rights of citizens are not infringed upon when its officials execute policies approved by it.

However, the problem one encounters while executing a particular act is that circumstances arise which had not been foreseen by the law-maker or

even the government that tries to fill in the *lacunae* through subsidiary legislation. For example, the Police Act empowers a police officer to prevent the escape of a suspected criminal by applying *minimum force*. What is minimum force? Common sense dictates that minimum force will depend on the circumstances and nature of each particular case. In other words, the police officer, an agent of government, is supposed to use his/her discretion and sense of good judgement to determine when to apply *minimum* force or whatever *quantum* of force he "deems fit" in the circumstances. Many citizens have taken the government to courts of law to seek redress for what they regarded as "executive lawlessness". In other words, many agents of the executive do "over-perform" the executive functions assigned to them either due to over-zealousness or lack of knowledge of the extent of their powers. The whole system of the structure of government in general terms provides for checks and balances so as to avoid the type of situation described above, but human beings being what they are, they seem to enjoy the use of machinery of government to either enrich themselves or boost their ego. This is why in modern democracies all over the world, the rallying cry is "*minimum*" government; that is less interference of officials of government in their daily affairs under the guise of executing government policies.

Checks on executive lawlessness by the executive itself through *self-restraint* seem to be the only way to avoid frequent clashes with the citizens and the judiciary. The reduction (if not elimination) in this area of conflict is a mark of good governance and a testimony to the fact that the executive powers of government are being used and applied for the purposes that they are meant, i.e. protection of citizens, promotion of individual and general welfare and provision of social and other services.

### **"Judicial" Powers of the Executive**

In principle, the executive branch of government has no judicial powers. In line with the classical doctrine of separation of powers, judicial powers and interpretation of laws, including review of administrative actions (judicial review) belong to courts of law. section 6(1) of the 1979 Constitution clearly states that "... the judicial powers of the Federation shall be vested in the courts to which this section relates, being courts established for the Federation. The courts are listed as:

- (a) the Supreme Court of Nigeria;

- (b) the Federal Court of Appeal;
- (c) the Federal High Court;
- (d) a High Court of a State;
- (e) a Sharia Court of Appeal of a State;
- (f) a Customary Court of Appeal of a State;
- (g) such other courts as may be authorised by law to exercise jurisdiction on matters with respect to which the National Assembly may make laws; and
- (h) such other courts as may be authorised by law to exercise jurisdiction at first instance or on appeal on matters with respect to which a House of Assembly may make laws [Section 6(5)].

The above constitutional provisions show that the executive "has no business" with law adjudication and interpretation. However, what obtains in practice is quite different from the above-stated position of the Constitution. The executive has come to increasingly assume the role of the judiciary in many instances. Let us take for instance a situation whereby the executive appoints a citizen into a statutory position, presents him with conditions of service (which he played no part in drawing up); accuses him of breaching those conditions of service; sets up a panel or disciplinary committee to "try" him; finds him "guilty" of the allegations against him and then dismisses him. This scenario has actually been taking place in the Public Service. For lack of better terminology, the legal literature has classified this power of the executive as *quasi-judicial*. The Report of the British Committee on Ministers' Powers (1932) states that a *quasi-judicial* decision pre-supposes an existing dispute between two or more parties and involves:

- (a) the presentation (not necessarily orally) of their case by the parties;
- (b) the ascertainment of any disputed facts by evidence adduced by the parties, often with the assistance of argument on that evidence; but does not necessarily involve the submission of argument on any disputed question of law; and never involves a decision which disposes of the whole matter by a finding upon disputed facts and an application of the law of the land to the facts so found, including where required a ruling upon any disputed question of law. This aspect is in fact taken over on administrative action, the character of which is determined by the Minister's free choice.

On the other hand, a *true* judicial decision presupposes an existing dispute between two or more parties, and then involves four requisites, to wit:

- (i) the presentation (not necessarily orally) of their case by the parties;
- (ii) the ascertainment of any disputed facts by evidence adduced by the parties, often with the assistance of argument on that evidence;
- (iii) the submission of argument on any disputed question of law;
- (iv) a decision which disposes of the whole matter by a finding upon disputed facts and an application of the law of the land to the facts so found, including where required a ruling upon any dispute question of law.

### **Administrative/Ministerial Powers**

An administrative/ministerial decision is understood as one for the making of which the authority in question (Minister, Director-General, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, etc.) is not required to employ any of the processes familiar in courts of law (hearing evidence and arguments, etc.) and where the grounds upon which he acts are left entirely to his discretion.

Commenting on the distinction between judicial and quasi-judicial/administrative powers, Benjafield and Whitmore (1967) argue that

*"the distinction between judicial and quasi-judicial powers on the one hand and administrative powers on the other hand rests mainly on the asserted lack of dispute and hearing procedures in the (latter) case; it says nothing as to the nature of the act to be performed. It is surely clear that almost every governmental decision affecting members of the public is capable of producing a dispute even though it may be a dispute between the government itself and a member of the public who is affected. The presence or absence of a hearing procedure will usually depend on a particular legislation involved".*

In the United States of America, it is held that there is no *real* distinction between administrative, judicial and a quasi-judicial powers for the reason that the Constitutional requirements of due process in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Amendments will convert administrative powers into adjudicative powers by requiring *inter alia*, the giving of fair hearing.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979 derives some of its principle from the American Constitution. Chapter IV, Section 33(1) clearly provides for right to fair hearing and states that

*"... in the determination of his civil rights and obligations, including any question or determination by or against any government or authority, a person shall be entitled to a fair hearing within a reasonable time by a court or other tribunal established by law and constituted in such manner as to secure its independence and impartiality."*

However, Section 33(2) further provides that

*"... without prejudice to the foregoing provisions of this Section, a law shall not be invalidated by reason only that it confers on any government or authority power to determine questions arising in the administration of a law that affects or may affect the civil rights and obligations of any person if such law:*

- (a) provides for an opportunity for the person whose rights and obligations may be affected to make representations to the administering authority before that authority makes the decision affecting that person; and
- (b) contains no provision making the determination of the administering authority final and conclusive ..."

In order to reassure citizens that the right to fair hearing and other rights are not empty slogans, Section 42 (1) of the same Chapter boldly invites citizens to claim their rights and states *inter alia* that

*"... any person who alleges that any of the provisions of this Chapter has been, is being or likely to be contravened in any state in relation to him may apply to a High Court in that State for redress ..."*

As we noted earlier in this paper, the Constitution is the basic or supreme law of the land and any other law (including quasi-judicial/administrative) that is inconsistent with the provision of the Constitution shall to the extent of the inconsistency be void (Section 1(1) of the 1979 Constitution).

In essence, that implies that all quasi-judicial and other administrative acts of government must not be *ultra-vires* the Constitution and the Enabling Acts. Government and its agents are obliged to observe all the known principles of natural justice especially when they are performing judicial or quasi-judicial functions. It is true that in principle, if the administrator's powers are classified as legislative, executive or administrative, the rules of natural justice do not strictly apply. However, the aggrieved citizen may still seek refuge under the provisions of the Constitution which is the supreme law.

## Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this paper to classify governmental powers in legal terms. In practice, powers of all the three principal organs of government (in the broad sense of the word) overlap. The Legislature carries out some executive functions when it implements its own Resolutions; the Executive legislates when it makes Regulations and issues Circulars to "give life" to seemingly "lifeless" legislations, and the judiciary "makes laws" when it pronounces on binding precedents, through law interpretation.

The government, being the executive arm of the *Three-in-One* (for they must work harmoniously for smooth administration of the affairs of state) needs, as of necessity some powers to enable it carry out its functions. These powers are delegated to it by the system to make subsidiary laws; issue and execute orders; investigate and punish offenders, sometimes administratively without recourse to cumbersome procedures of duly established Courts and Tribunals; and if need be, assume quasi-judicial functions and dispense with cases speedily. However in the exercise of these enormous powers, the government has to be guided by the principles of justice and fair play for it controls all the instruments of coercion which could be abused by its officials and agents.

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## CIVIL SERVICE REFORM: LESSONS FROM AFRICA

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*Clay Wescott*

### **Introduction**

Civil Service Reform (CSR) measures are increasingly being adopted in several African countries. In many cases they are closely linked to structural adjustment programmes. The results have been mixed and the effectiveness of the aid provided in support of these programmes has sometimes been limited. This article focuses on Africa's experience in civil service reform and draws lessons that may enable donors to improve the impact of their aid in the area.

The first section examines the conceptual basis of civil service reform. The reason for exploring the theoretical angle is that measurable results are slim at the outset, and prudent donors will be reluctant to provide the continuous long-term support needed unless they understand and accept the theoretical foundations of CSR.

The second section examines two components of CSR, and provides examples of both. The final sections will discuss specific recommendations which donors may wish to consider, including plans for implementing the Special Programme of Assistance for African (SPA) Guidelines on CSR.

### **I. The theoretical basis of CSR**

One of realities of CSR in Africa, or anywhere else, is that sustainable results are slow to achieve. In order to gain confidence at the initial stages of reform, one needs a persuasive theoretical framework. There are at least two perspectives worth exploring. First, is the contention that most African governments will move toward rational meritocracy as the organizing principle of public sector management. The move (towards meritocracy) will proceed at different paces, will be customized to local conditions, and will face major setbacks along the way. Second, it may be argued that the same underlying forces will trigger economic and political liberalisation, also at different speeds and with possibility of setbacks.

## **Rational Bureaucracy**

The first assumption - that of the triumph of the rational, meritocratic model in Africa - may at first seem at odds with recent experience. The massive administrative reform effort undertaken in the context of structural adjustment programmes over the past decade has brought the issue of civil service effectiveness to the forefront of the management development debate. The reason is that the rational, hierarchical, meritocratic model has failed in many African countries. Governments are not able to carry out basic functions of formulating policies, delivering services, and maintaining the infrastructure.

According to the rational model, complex tasks are divided hierarchically into simpler ones, many of which can be carried out as a matter of routine. The assignment of complex vs. routine tasks is then carried out based on the jobs' relative positions in the hierarchy. There are traditional forms of social and formal organisation in Africa that have this character. The Masai and the Samburu, to take just two of many examples, apply in their social organisation the concepts of division of labour (defined roles), hierarchy (a gerontocracy), and merit as a basis for determining influence and status within age groups (e.g. firestick elders).

Yet efforts to promote this model in African governments have had perverse effects on incentives, encouraged "rent-seeking", "free-loading", and other unintended outcomes. The reason is that many African civil services have two competing goals, viz: task performance/service delivery on the one hand, and political incorporation, on the other. The former is the subject of administrative reform, but is often the secondary goal. The latter is often the primary goal i.e. the incorporation of a politically selected group as a means of political control, on terms which concede to most of them a right not to a say in government policies, but to a place, albeit a subordinate one, in the hierarchies of political control. Political incorporation through patronage is an effective controlling tool by political elites because jobs are scarce, and as a result there is pressure on civil servants at all levels to dispense favours to extended family members, ethnic affiliates, school mates, and so forth.

The central features of such bureaucracies include group solidarity, the subordination of specialized, expert knowledge to bureaucratic control, lack of transparency in the application of rules, high tolerance of misdemeanour and ineptitude, and general laxity in the administration of the career service.

Reforms such as downsizing and "rightsizing" threatens not only the jobs of civil servants in such settings, but the system of political control. These reforms also expose to grave risks the well-being of the network of individuals supported by the job holder. This is important in Africa because of the absence of social security safety nets provided by the states. Leaders in such settings may take advantage of downsizing programmes to get rid of political opponents, and to refill the positions with relatives and ethnic cohorts.

There is nothing wrong with connections/networking as a lubricant of socio-political systems in pre-bureaucratic Africa. By itself, the use of connections was compatible with economic aspirations of diverse groups. It is the *modus operandi* favoured by Indian/Pakistani communities in Africa, or by the overseas Chinese (networking is "guanxi" in Chinese). However, while ethnic networking can work well in certain circumstances in contemporary Africa, the focus tends to be on the appropriation of public resources for private consumption, rather than investment in productive enterprises.

To get around such problems, some advocate decentralized models of management development which makes use of alternative arrangements for the production of public goods and the delivery of development services, as well as for cost-recovery and maintenance, e.g. market-oriented public services industries and modern or "traditional" local administration units (Wunsch, 1991:443-447). Others argue that "grass-root" community organizations are best able to mobilize the support of the poor (Salsman, 1991:295-302).

Most scholars and practitioners would agree, however, that Africa requires strong, centrally directed and hierarchical meritocracies, adapted to the African institutional and cultural context (Werlin, 1992:225-233; Cohen and Peterson, 1995:77-82). They would argue that decentralization cannot work without strong central capacity, at least for certain functions. They also would "regard the career civil service concept as a non-debatable necessity for any state whose leaders seriously aspire to promote social and economic development" (Easman, 1991:43), and agree that "traditional, mainly centralized civil service management models provide the best starting point for many of the least developed country administrations" (Numberg, 1992:38).

How can African governments bring such systems about? Some stress the need for a "top down" politically-driven reform process. Thus Werlin (1992:204), citing the example of countries such as Korea, argues that reforming

central bureaucracies is primarily a problem of political will and government capacity to effectively use persuasive and manipulative (rather than coercive and corrupting) forms of power.

Easman (1991:138-139), on the other hand, advocates a "bottom up" approach to administrative reform as more effective than the comprehensive, system-wide management development and reform strategies which, he claims, disrupt familiar routines and threaten established centres of powers without demonstrating convincingly their effectiveness. He prescribes, instead, incremental, confidence-building measures, such as training, new technologies (e.g. microcomputers), introduced with staff participation and focused at the level of individual programmes or organizations.

Whether through a top-down, bottom-up, or some hybrid process, rational, meritocracy will increasingly be forced on all governments. There is considerable historical evidence that states that do not adopt such structures will be defeated militarily or overthrown by rivals that do (Fukuyama, 1992:73-78). African governments are no different, and will inevitably move toward rational, meritocratic systems.

### **Economic and Political Liberalization**

However, the triumph of meritocracy will not, in itself, guarantee that African countries will move toward market economies and democratic polities. In the 1960's and 1970's, many African governments, albeit, with strong support from the major donors, achieved good economic results by using meritocracies to spearhead central economic planning.

More recently, state controls over prices, commercial investments, and allocation of goods have increasingly been seen as the reason for economic stagnation in Africa. State controls are thus being replaced throughout Africa by market mechanisms.

The present faith in the market is criticized by many, since poverty continues to increase in Africa, even in countries fully embracing market mechanisms. However, there are strong reasons for believing that markets will continue to be dominant. Economic development is increasingly based on fast-changing technological innovation, and this innovation works best where people are free to articulate new ideas and be rewarded on the basis of the results emanating

from the implementation of the ideas. Technological innovation also depends on investment decisions made on the basis of market prices. Modern African economies are too complex to be managed by government bureaucracies, even those based on the classical, rational model. The apartheid system in South Africa provided the most publicized failure of central planning on the continent, but Zambia, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Ghana have also abandoned central economic planning. Economic growth in Africa, as in the rest of the world, seems to be most robust when markets function well.

It is thus safe to conclude that markets will triumph in Africa. The process will move at different speeds in different countries, and there will be setbacks along the way. This is not to say that the present donor-sponsored SAPs are the correct approach. Even the World Bank admits that these programmes are too often dominated by foreign experts, and are delivering growth rates too low to make a serious dent on poverty (Schatz, 1994:679-692). SAPs will be improved, or might even be replaced by a radically different approach. At a recent SPA meeting, a World Bank Vice President said that SPA 4 might have very different targets from SPA3, such as raising the proportion of girls graduating from primary school. However, the central role of market forces in economic development is assured.

The argument so far is that meritocracy and markets are making a comeback in Africa, and that there is no going back. However, there is still one missing link - liberal democracy.

There is considerable evidence from around the world that liberal democracy usually goes along with economic development (Fukuyama, 1992; Ball and Rauser, 1995:897-912). Democracies are better able than any other system to adjudicate conflicts among the interest groups that proliferate with increasing development. Even more important, democracies offer formal recognition of the dignity and worth of every human being. Democracy allows everyone the freedom to make money and climb out of poverty, but it does not promise the elimination of poverty. What it promises is to value each citizen at their own sense of self worth, regardless of their race, religion or ethnic origin. It promises that every adult citizen has the right to participate in the government that establishes these rights. Citizens can vote, run for office, write newspaper articles supporting candidates or positions, or serve in various capacities in the government of their countries.

There is no necessary link between democracy and market-based economic development. If anything democracy may be a drag on economic efficiency. Policy decisions are often made in democracies on the basis of popular appeal, and yet the people are often poorly informed as to the economic consequences of these policies.

However, economic development creates conditions that make democracy more likely for two reasons. First, education and technologically expanding media develop in the people the feeling and/or awareness that they are human beings with dignity, and that they ought to have that dignity recognized. Secondly, education breaks down old class barriers by favouring equality of opportunity. This leads to greater mobility, which in turn promotes the spread of democratic ideas.

Thus, the probability is that as Africans become better educated, and better off, democracy will spread. The policies of donors over the last five years to promote democracy may have helped speed up the process, but in the end, it would come by itself. As nations become more democratic, citizens will demand greater transparency, and hold their governments to a higher standard of performance. It goes without saying that only meritocracies will be able to meet this increasingly high standard of performance. Thus, over time, the goal of an accountable, performing civil service in Africa will become realizable.

## **II. Implementation Targets and Components of CSR**

The underlying assumption of this article is that civil service reform in Africa is essentially a process of moving toward a meritocracy in the context of economic liberalization. It is a long process. Countries will move at different, unpredictable speeds, and not always in a forward direction. However, the overall trend is inevitable.

As presented in the SPA guidelines, CSR implementation in Africa is a long-term, multidisciplinary undertaking. Improvements are generally needed at many levels: improved individual skills, improved management of work groups and individual organizations, improved inter-organizational coordination through task networks, improved public sector institutional context (adequate budgetary support, appropriate rules and regulations) and a supportive environment (stable and legitimate political regime, a healthy and educated citizenry).

This article focuses on a few of the components of civil service reform. Specific examples of CSR implementation will be given under two broad categories: institutional development and capacity building. The purpose is to give some examples where CSR progress is being made in Africa, and to suggest how some of the problems that arise can be addressed.

## **Institutional Development**

CSR may include a wide array of institutional development interventions. Two examples of the most commonly applied intervention modalities are improvements in personnel management systems and procedures, and downsizing programmes.

### **Personnel Management Systems and Procedures**

A good example of the first type of personnel management reform is Botswana. In order to push for localization, in 1971 the government appointed a Presidential Commission on Localization and Training, and started to systematically monopolize all university graduates, giving second priority to the local development of the parastatals and the private sector. Thus, the civil service is made up of the best educated Batswana, and this is one of the main reasons for its excellent performance.

Promotion within the civil service is directly linked to one's performance. There is a very regularized promotion system, where the performance of the civil servants is evaluated regularly by the Central Civil Service Commission, which has a supervisory position. The strict merit criteria employed at the recruitment stage are thus applied through the average civil servant's career. Civil servants who show the ability to move up the ladder, but do not have the necessary education, can bridge the education gap by attending training courses.

As the Batswana have become better educated, the criteria used to select civil servants have become even more selective. As a result, the younger civil servants entering the government today are often much better educated than their superiors. This has caused tension between the two generations, and many older bureaucrats have been asked to resign to leave room for the better educated and trained civil servants. It had been the plan of the government from the start to replace the first group. That is one of the main reasons why the retirement age of the civil service was set at 45.

This sort of recycling is also taking place in the political parties, where younger MPs have asked their seniors not to seek renomination. Parliament members have also been seeking a more active role, and in 1989, they added the cadre of policy analyst to their list of personnel (Holm and Molutsi, 1992:338). Furthermore, as members of parliament become better educated, they tend to put pressure on cabinet ministers to take better control of the civil servants in their ministries.

There is concerted effort to minimize the role of ethnicity in the civil service. Rotations and promotions are made without regard for ethnic identity (Holm and Molutsi, 1992). Secondary school students destined for the civil service are placed in schools outside their home districts.

In each of the six development plans the highest emphasis was placed on education and training. Botswana's expenditure on education rose from 2.7% of GNP in 1960, to 9.2% by 1986 (UNDP, 1992:148), a huge increase, when one considers the rapid growth in GNP. Simultaneously, its combined primary and secondary schools enrolment ratio rose from 46% in 1970 to 86% in 1987, one of the largest increases in the world. Primary education was made free and recently secondary education became free as well. The government has also invested resources in higher education.

Additionally, there are many different training programmes designed to improve the quality of the civil service, such as on-the-job non-formal, expatriate training, external part-time and correspondence programmes, external institution programmes which can be local, in other SADC countries, or overseas. There are training programmes for all levels of the civil service. The stated objective of these different programmes is to improve the motivation, performance and productivity of civil servants. Localization is always a long-term objective.

In 1987, the Directorate of Public Service Management issued a Training Plan as well as a Training Management Handbook to be used as guidelines for all the institutions involved in training. The emphasis has been to upgrade or improve existing programmes and facilities rather than build new ones. There has also been an attempt to provide more training in-house and in Botswana, and, when possible, to limit foreign training to SADC countries rather than overseas.

The Botswana government has been fostering management development through on-the-job training by qualified supervisors. These are either trainers at workshops, or Botswana or expatriate supervisors. On average a "generalist" civil servant will receive throughout a 25-year career, one two-week induction course, one twelve-week "basic" course, five three-week refresher course, and two four-week tailor-made Departmental oriented courses, or about one and a half weeks a year.

Botswana has refrained from a policy of "localization" for its own sake, due to the shortage of educated or trained counterparts. In theory, any position filled with an expatriate is up for localization. A World Bank report (Raphaeli, 1984:67) describes the process of localization:

*...ideally, an "understudy" or "shadow" post is created for the local who will be with the expatriate for a number of months to determine his/her professional strengths and preferences in relation to that post. Thereafter, the local person is sent for academic or specialized training, usually for a period of two years. Upon return, the local person spends six months to a year as counterpart to the expatriate while receiving on-the-job training. At the end of that period, the counterpart relationship is reversed and the expatriate becomes an adviser to the local who has taken full responsibilities.*

In practice, many positions continue to be held by expatriates. In this respect, Botswana's experience is different from most African countries'. It experienced very little colonial subjugation, being mostly ignored by the British administration which oversaw the protectorate. Therefore, it did not perceive European management aid as colonialism and did not reject it at the time of independence. Indeed, Botswana still relies on hundreds of expatriate officials in key positions, much as the states of the Persian Gulf, for many reasons:

First, the type of skills needed has shifted to highly technical and professional backgrounds from the more generalist administrators of the earlier period. There are a number of professions where economies of scale make it very difficult to provide local or even overseas training for Botswana. Secondly, this shift from generalist to specialist overseas recruitment has occurred during the decade of the 1980s, when the income from diamond revenues dramatically increased. This has meant that the presence of

expatriates is linked to images of prosperity among middle class Batswana. Sectoral growth, outside of the public sector, added to the strain on the available pool of trained manpower in the country as it was contributing to economic growth. The existing educational and technical training facilities are hard pressed to meet the demand for trained and educated manpower. Rapid development of the private sector, especially the mining and commercial sectors, makes it increasingly difficult for the public service to retain the service of highly qualified and experienced manpower (Mentz and Picard, 1993).

Although the percentage of expatriates in all levels of the civil service has dropped from 61% in 1964 to 23.5% in 1982, the number remains high due to the growth of the bureaucracy. Of the senior and middle level staff, the number of expatriates grew from 438 in 1964 to 713 in 1982 (Mentz and Picard, 1993) and 653 in 1987 (Mmualefe, 1990). Thus, the original goal set by the Botswana government of complete localization of the public service by 1990 was not achieved, but high-quality policy making was assured. In return, politicians allow their better-educated colleagues in the civil service to make most major policy decisions (Holm and Molutsi, 1992).

A number of institutions prepare the Batswana for the civil service or for entry into the University of Botswana. Examples of institutions offering preparatory, bridging courses are the National Health Institute, the Botswana Agricultural College, and the Botswana Institute of Administration and Commerce (BIAC). BIAC provides training to non-university graduates with supervisory management studies for elementary manpower development. More advanced studies for "middle and senior management training across the private and public sector" are offered by the Institute of Development Management (IDM).

Botswana is a successful African case of civil service capacity building - a strategy which has rapid economic development as a primary objective. Botswana by and large achieved this objective while avoiding serious problems that have plagued other African civil services such as corruption, ineffective service delivery, sub-minimum-wage compensation, and the recruitment and promotion of unqualified staff. Most other African countries are lagging behind Botswana in setting up well-run government meritocracies. One of the greatest challenges these countries are facing is how to creatively recruit, motivate and retain outstanding personnel when under severe fiscal constraints.

Some are being motivated as the democratic movements in their countries gather momentum. In Eritrea, for example, top government officials receive food rations and basic housing, but no salary. Yet they are very highly motivated by the transition to democracy in their country. Others are motivated to work for government organisations that have a new focus on broad based development, rather than the previous focus on extracting resources from the masses to benefit a tiny, privileged elite (Government of Eritrea, 1993).

Despite the inherent appeal of democratization to some top professionals, there are structural problems that are making it difficult for emerging democracies to offer competitive packages. Benin, for example, has recently adopted a representative system of government - one that is as democratic as any in Africa. Yet civil service reforms have had to focus initially on redressing previous imbalances, such as the increase by more than five times in the size of the public service during the 70s and 80s, the recruitment of many with false credentials, and the heavy burden of salaries on the budget (75 per cent of recurrent expenses in 1991). In view of the importance attached to these steps, other measures to attract and motivate officers with rare skills have not yet been systematically addressed, except for some measures (such as improved maternity leave and pension rights) to attract competent women.

Cape Verde is another nation that has recently made a transition to democratic government. Although in a better financial position than Benin (personnel expenses stood at 51 per cent of recurrent expenses in 1991), real salaries declined by about 50 per cent during the 80s. Reforms being carried out between 1991 - 96 will, if successful, help to attract and better motivate staff. They include selection of top managers based on personnel management skills, a policy to fill 50 per cent of all vacancies through external competition, a new decompressed salary scale, and separate scales for specialized areas such as health (Fonseca, 1994).

A multi-party arrangement does not by itself ensure improved professionalism in the civil service. Kenya in the first two decades after independence had mechanisms to ensure autonomy in the civil service and judiciary. Members of the Public Service Commission (PSC) and High Court judges could not be removed without good reason and due process. Yet today, despite multiparty elections, the President has the power to dismiss members of the PSC and the judiciary (Barkan, 1992:173-4, 185).

The importance of attracting and motivating high quality staff transcends political ideology. For example, one of the critical success factors for East Asian economic dynamism has been meritocratic bureaucracies, helped by the Confucian tradition of historically autocratic China (Chalmers, 1987). African states such as Burkina Faso have recognized the importance of fostering a meritocracy, at least, at level of their statutes and procedures. Starting from Independence, officials trained at state expense have been bonded for 10 years, and offered generous car and housing provisions as other motivating factors. Since the mid-80s, retaining staff has not been a problem because of high unemployment. Yet during the same period, motivation remains a serious problem, and is being addressed by revising pay systems which recognize and reward merit, restructuring organisations on the basis of actual responsibilities, and basing promotions on merit and competence rather than political affiliation. In the same vein, Mauritania recently set up a Commission Nationale des concours as an independent agency to carry out testing of civil servants.

Other strategies for attracting and motivating top officials include increased salary compression (e.g. Zambia, Botswana and Lesotho), and payment of "scarcity" or "retention" allowances for scarce professional skills (e.g. Gambia, Lesotho, Zambia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe). In view of the political problems associated with salary increases, Tanzania offers 30 different types of allowances, among them, housing, house maintenance, petrol, fare, bicycle, house servant, special, professional, risk, postmortem, clinical, on-call, teachers, lunch, subsistence, overtime, outfit, sitting, uniform allowances, and 15 other types of allowance for police and prison personnel. Consequently, direct monetary allowance constitutes about 50 per cent of the basic salary/wage in a few grades (SS.2, GS.10, RP.9 and RP.8). The top 500 civil servants in the SS grades get in addition free furnished government quarters, with transport, electricity supply, water and sewage services, and telephone. If monetized, total fringe benefits to this group can be more than ten times the size of the basic pay per month (Nyirabu and Mudzoga, 1993).

Another dimension to the problem of attracting and motivating top-quality staff is the need for civil services to reflect the diversity of their populations. South Africa is a topical case. Of 7,258 officials in senior positions in the public service, an estimated 96 per cent are white (Mokgoro, 1992). Although 61 per cent of South Africa's public employees are non-white (van der Merwe, 1992:173), most are in low-level jobs. Women of all races face similar

obstacles. Although 46 per cent of public servants are female, they hold less than 5 per cent of senior positions (Mokgoro, 1992).

Aside from being morally indefensible, this imbalance in racial and gender distribution of posts seriously undermines the legitimacy of the South African public service, and thereby its effectiveness in delivering services. Progress to redress this imbalance, without unduly expanding the size of an already large public sector, will be a crucial challenge determining the success of the transition to majority rule.

Many argue that the key to attracting and motivating quality professionals is competitive compensation. There is no question that in many African countries, inflation combined with rapid rises in public employment and stagnant or declining revenues have led to compensation well below the minimum needed for basic necessities. Part of the problem here is that African urban formal sector wages are on average more than twice as high as in other sectors. Since government officials typically work in urban centres their cost of living is tied to the urban formal sector wage structure. African governments have a much greater burden trying to pay such wages than governments in East Asia, where the urban formal sector premium is closer to 20 per cent (Page and Petri, 1993).

However, merely paying competitive compensation does not solve all motivational problems. For example, South Africa's Commission for Administration sets public service salaries between 5 and 15 per cent below the market level. Since this is compensated for by security of tenure and market-related pension benefits, the salaries have generally kept up with inflation, unlike in many other countries throughout the continent. Yet despite these relatively high salaries, government organizations are beset with problems of incompetence, corruption and misappropriation of funds (Schronenn, 1993).

### **Downsizing Measures**

Downsizing is one of the most controversial CSR components. Downsizing programmes which reduce the size and cost of the civil service to an affordable and sustainable level can contribute to macroeconomic stabilisation, and assist governments to restore budgetary stability. In general, downsizing and rightsizing programmes should take place after ministerial reviews because these will identify redundant posts and the personnel to be retrenched.

However, in some cases where there is a "ghost worker" problem and gross overstaffing, downsizing may take place before systematic rationalization measures are undertaken. Downsizing programmes generally need to be accompanied by efforts to establish a robust personnel information and control system to prevent reemployment of retrenched personnel. It is usually better to undertake retrenchment before pay reform is implemented since this should generate some resources to meet the cost of higher salaries. It will also reduce opposition from those remaining in the civil service as they perceive the scope for higher pay as a result of the reform programme.

UNDP has supported downsizing efforts in Africa with mixed success. A good example is Eritrea. Last year, UNDP consultants prepared a review of all government departments and some parastatals. The reviewers asked each agency to answer questions such as: "What is our mission?" "Is it still the right mission?" "Is it still worth doing?" "If we were not already doing this, would we go into it now?". The answer to the last question was often: "Yes, we would go into this again, but with some changes. We have learned a few things".

These findings became the basis for the recommendations. The Cabinet analysed the recommendations, and agreed on the overall structure of ministries. A government task force was then constituted to study the internal structure of each ministry on the basis of the review and Cabinet decision, and to determine which staff were needed. The process up to this point took about 12 months.

Only after this work was completed did downsizing commence. About 10,000 were retrenched out of a total of about 25,000. This included roughly 6,500 civilians, and 3,500 ex-combatants who had been working in civil service positions. Retrenchees included nearly all messengers, cleaners, and secretaries below the senior executive level. These functions are now contracted out when needed.

Other staff were retrenched in each ministry based on the recommendations of the task force. Unlike in other African countries, this was not a voluntary programme. Retrenchees were paid 6 months salary, plus their pension entitlements. Other retrenchment exercises were carried out in parastatals (10,000 out of 20,000) and the Asmara municipality (2,000 out of 3,000). A total of 50,000 ex-combatants have also been demobilised.

Throughout this process, salaries have not been changed. There are two scales, one for civil servants, and one (slightly higher) for ex-combatants. These salaries will ultimately be unified, and raised to be closer to market levels.

The experience with civil service downsizing in much of the rest of Africa has been less successful. Most countries have adopted a voluntary retirement programme. Some put a restriction on who can leave, e.g. Kenya restricted the programme to low level staff. Some commence downsizing before doing studies of where there are surplus employees, e.g. Ghana in the late 1980s. Some have done extensive studies to identify redundant workers, but then have carried out downsizing with little regard to the findings, e.g. Tanzania in the last 3 years. Some did a proper analysis of who needs to be let go, and then discovered that they could not afford the severance payments, e.g. Zambia where payments negotiated with unions are equal to 10 years salary.

Some countries besides Eritrea have shifted government functions to contractor status. Zimbabwe's downsizing has worked broadly this way over the last few years. For example, road maintenance workers employed centrally by the Ministry of Works were retrenched, and sent back to their home areas. Since then, when maintenance work is needed, the same workers are hired on contract to do the work in their area.

The most far-reaching downsizing has been Uganda's, where nearly 50 percent of posts on the payroll have been eliminated based on the recommendations of a UNDP-funded public service review commission, as endorsed by the Cabinet and implemented with help from the World Bank and other donors. Many retrenchees were ghost workers, and for this reason, the social and political costs were reduced. As in Eritrea, there was unity of purpose among the top leadership (a leadership emerging out of a successful liberation struggle), and a lack of democratic process through which opposition to reforms could be mobilized. To partially compensate for this lack of formal democratic institutions, the UNDP-funded Public Service Review and Reorganisation Commission, which formulated the vision for the reforms, polled thousands of people and took their views into account (Langseth).

Despite these advantages, the downsizing in Uganda was not as effective as it might have been, because it was carried out before functional reviews of ministries were completed, and before an effective personnel control system

was in place. There also was no link between the downsizing and a related programme to decentralize government functions to district and local government (Brown, et al, 1995).

A main purpose of downsizing is to generate fiscal savings. There are at least two dimensions to this. All downsizing efforts try to achieve savings from civil servants who are no longer on the payroll, that is, net of severance payments. In some cases, these savings are intended to be used to increase the compensation of civil servants still on the payroll. In other, mainly francophone, cases these savings are intended to reduce government expenditure on personnel costs.

Although elusive, there have been some positive results. An example of the former case is Uganda, where nominal pay has increased by about 50 per cent a year from 1990-94. The reasons are both because of an increased share of government expenditures taken by salary payments, and because there are fewer employees to pay. Looking at the Ugandan cost/benefit calculus in another way, a US\$31 million investment over the period 1989-95 by the government and donors is offset by salary cost savings from removing ghosts since 1990, and from retrenchment and voluntary retirement since 1992 estimated to exceed US\$160 million (Brown, et al, 1995). As an example of the latter case, Cameroon has reduced its government payroll CFA expenditure in recent years by 37 per cent (more in real terms) by a combination of downsizing and pay reduction.

The difficulties with downsizing are evident from the ongoing experience of Malawi. Malawi is currently implementing a donor-supported CSR programme. The government asked the donors to carry out a study last April with a view to identifying alternative approaches to downsizing, the lessons of comparative experience, and the measures to be adopted in Malawi. The donor declined, saying that downsizing would not be an issue in Malawi.

Since then, views have changed. 12,000 industrial class (temporary) workers have already been retrenched, with government-paid severance packages according to regulations (3 weeks salary for employees of less than 5 years employment, somewhat more for the rest). According to the head of the CSR Steering Committee, the result has been serious political, social and economic problems. Indeed, some of the retrenchees have since been asked to report back for work, apparently because the process by which they were retrenched was not correct.

The reason for the sudden interest in downsizing is the unsustainable fiscal position, getting increasingly precarious due to drought, increases in service delivery (e.g. primary school enrolment is up from 1.9 million before the election to 3.2 million in 1996), and civil service wage increases under pressure from unions. A more comprehensive approach to CSR as advocated in the SPA guidelines would have foreseen this.

To motivate the government to take action, there is a \$30 million "floating" component of the IDA adjustment operation presently under negotiation. This component will be released subject to performance on civil service reform, particularly on retrenchment. This component was raised by the World Bank at the recent SPA meeting in Paris as an innovative part of one of three "high-impact" adjustment operations in Africa. This new approach by the Bank, also under design in Madagascar and Eritrea, features single tranche operations meant to reward recent past economic management performance. IDZ's response was to design, in Washington, a new project component to carry out a "quick and dirty" 6 week functional review of all ministries, meant to provide guidance to the retrenchment effort.

Still, expectations are that the government will act on retrenchment, before this review is completed, and before the results of the recent civil service census have been released, thus adding to the appearance of uncoordinated, poorly thought through policy. A further complication is that some of the officials allegedly being designated for the next round of retrenchments are officials thought sympathetic to the Malawi Congress Party, including 11 permanent secretaries. This political aspect to retrenchment is not unusual: it featured in the SPA case study of Central African Republic, for example. Still, it is leading to staunch resistance to retrenchment in Malawi, since key jobs are on the line. As an example of this resistance, the Deputy Secretary to the President and Cabinet (DSPC), representing the SPC as head of the civil service, said that the government was taking a cautious view on retrenchment, and had not made any decisions on it. Yet the Minister of Finance is expected to announce progress on retrenchment to the CG meeting scheduled for Dec. 11, 1995.

The lack of trust between ministers and permanent secretaries goes beyond retrenchment, and is another example of a problem not being solved under the CSR framework. The CSR programme attempted to address the issue with two workshops last August: one for permanent secretaries and the other for

ministers. There was meant to be a third bringing together both groups, but it never took place. There are various reasons for this, but an important one is that the August seminars degenerated into accusations and finger pointing, rather than constructive consensus building. The permanent secretaries complained of micro-management by ministers, acting as executive ministers, and ministers and their personal assistants claimed that permanent secretaries were not doing enough to spearhead the reform agenda. Again, the lack of trust between politicians and civil servants is a very common problem, particularly during regime changes in many countries. It can be addressed using process consulting and OD skills, but the CSR programme was not set up to do this.

### **Capacity Building for Improved Service Delivery**

In addition to fiscal stabilization, improving service delivery is an ultimate goal of CSR. There are two types of services needing improvement: services provided by one government agency to another, and services provided by government to citizens. Both types can be provided directly by the government, or subcontracted through an NGO or private company under government supervision.

The first type of service, government-to-government, is important because it is often vital to ensure service delivery to product end-users. For example, adequate budgetary support is vital for ensuring that rural health clinics have adequate supplies, and can pay their staff. Without supplies and regular pay cheques, service delivery will suffer.

Thus, capacity building for improved service delivery often features in African CSRs. It is closely linked with institutional development. Capacity is the ability to perform appropriate tasks. Capacity is not just an organization's human resource skill profile, or overall efficiency. It is part of an active process. Capacity relates to what is required for a particular organization to achieve its purposes effectively, efficiently, and sustainably (Hilderbrand and Grindle, 1994).

Having the right purposes is just as important as having capacity for carrying them out. Former President Nyerere once said: "Efficiency matters. In a poor economy waste is a sin. The question is efficiency for what and for whom?" (Green, 1995).

For our purposes, capacity building interventions are those focused on improving the performance of specific tasks, while institutional development interventions are more broad based. Yet capacity building is both dependent on and necessary for institutional development. It is dependent, because neither individual nor organizational performance can improve without appropriate incentives, rules, and systems. It is necessary, because managing institutional changes requires high-level management skills.

This leads to a difficult problem of sequencing: the productive capacity needed for institutional development is hard to find until the institutional development (ID) effort has been successful. Neither component can work well before the other is in place, yet usually both are needed. The attempted solution is often to import technical capacity from outside the government, use this to carry out the ID, and then build national capacity based on the new incentives, rules and systems. The risks in excessive reliance on overseas technical assistance in the creation of institutional capacity are discussed extensively by Balogun (1997:70-75).

To better understand this area, UNDP recently sponsored six country case studies of capacity in budget formulation and service delivery (agricultural extension and maternal-child health services, four of which were in Africa (Hilderbrand and Grindle, 1994). The findings are summarized in subsequent paragraphs.

Capacity is much affected by conditions external to the task networks of officials and organizations that work together to accomplish a given task. For example, Morocco's relatively high level of education, and stable and legitimate political system work together to create a high level of capacity on which the public sector can draw. By contrast, Central African Republic's history of coups, repression, limited education, and heavy reliance on TA work together to constrain the creation of capacity.

Not surprisingly, countries with favourable environments for capacity creation, such as Morocco, tend also to have efficient and effective organizations broadly capable of carrying out many different tasks. Countries with very unfavourable environments, such as Central African Republic, tend to have organizations incapable of effectively carrying out most tasks. The other countries were somewhere in between. In these countries, carefully targeted capacity building interventions were sometimes effective.

There were cases where efforts to improve interactions among organizations in a task network helped to improve performance. For example, in Ghana the Department of Agricultural Extension Services was strengthened to better coordinate different providers of agricultural extension. In addition, the Crops Research Institute trained extension services staff from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and regularly checked with farmers to ensure that its research and extension services were appropriate. As a result, agricultural extension in Ghana improved.

Another approach is to inculcate in officials a sense of mission, pride in how hard and professionally they worked, and commitment to the importance of the task they are performing. This was the case in agricultural research institutes in Ghana and Morocco. This commitment can be, to some extent, independent of salary levels. For example, although in Morocco pay levels among agricultural extension professionals had deteriorated, mission commitment had not suffered to the same degree.

The structure of work, including authority and inter-personal relationships, also affect capacity. In the Asuansi farm institute in Ghana, regular consultation, share responsibilities, and participation in decision making encouraged staff to keep deteriorated facilities in working order.

Management skills are important in building capacity. In Tanzania, medical doctors with no management training were managing the health service, and this led to inefficiency, confusion, poor inventory control and lack of morale in health clinics and hospitals.

Incentive systems are also important. Obviously, staff cannot perform at their best if they are not paid a living wage. However, the UNDP study showed that task-specific, non-monetary incentives also play a very strong role. In agricultural extension in Morocco, for example, those selected as "best agricultural extension worker" in a region got special prizes and bonuses, as did those working in areas where the "best farmer" was named. In Ghana's Crops Research Institute, there was a probationary period followed by a performance review. Consistently poor performance was dealt with by dismissal.

Closely related is open and competitive recruitment. Without exception, the best performers tend to be those recruited after public announcements of

positions, rigorous examinations and/or interviews, and an objective assessment by a review board.

The study also points out the links between capacity building and training, staff retention, and the utilization of staff and technical assistance.

### **III. Proposals for donor support to CSR**

The following are some of the suggestions emanating from the cases discussed above (additional suggestions are embodied in the SPA Guidelines on CSR).

#### **Identifying and Supporting CSR Supporters**

One of the major roadblocks to CSR implementation, as discussed above in the case of Malawi, is the lack of trust and teamwork between and among the political and administrative cadres of government.

This problem is not unique to Malawi (Heclo, 1977; Kaufman, 1981; Fukuyama, 1995). For example, similar issues are faced in South Africa by the newly appointed ministers and directors general vis-a-vis incumbent civil servants. Comparative experience suggests that these problems can be addressed through actions such as the following:

- Identifying groups or individuals that oppose policies, their motivations, the particular aspect of the policy that may not be widely accepted, and other obstacles;
- Determining strategies to change the positions of opposing individuals and groups, mobilizing potential supporters, and changing the public images associated with particular decisions;
- Constructing an ongoing record of information related to a policy open to all key stakeholders involved in policy or strategy discussions;
- Carrying out teambuilding workshops and other activities which set the parameters for working together, define missions, clients, outputs, action plans, organizational responsibilities and establish monitoring and evaluation systems.

UNDP is currently testing a computer software ("Political Mapping") which helps facilitate this process.

### **Separating Training from Operational Activities**

Many TORs for TA personnel imply that experts should carry out both essential professional functions and to train national staff to carry out these functions. In many cases, this is neither possible nor desirable. Even though the long-term goal is to replace expatriates with nationals, this will take a long time and cannot be done all at once.

In an ideal world, experts could be recruited for every TA position that combined expertise both in training and in the required functional area. In reality, such experts are rare. Thus, it is more honest to target certain positions as organizational development (OD) or training positions, and to recruit such expertise for these positions. Other line positions should be filled with expertise in the functional area concerned.

In any work setting, every employee can and should be able to work as part of a team, and to help train colleagues whenever possible, and TA staff are no exception. The issue is one of emphasis: training specialists, including those provided under TA arrangements, should be mainly responsible for OD or training, and other professionals should focus on operational activities specified in their contracts of employment.

As discussed above, capacity building depends on many factors, and OD/training is only one of them. For example, one key factor is the way managers manage their work groups. The likelihood of tension arising is high when expatriate TA is part of the group. Managers may tend to rely more on expatriate than on local staff because they are more experienced, more productive (in part because they are hired on contract rather than on civil service terms), because they are seen as more politically neutral, etc. Yet, this tendency to lean on expatriates can be very demotivating to the national staff who feel marginalized.

To build national capacity, managers need to make a special effort to include nationals as part of work teams for all important assignments. Managers need to recognize the accomplishments of nationals, and insist that they work alongside colleagues with more experience and be fully part of high-profile

assignments. Of course, there will always be tradeoffs: some work needs to be done urgently, and the fastest way to get it done may be to assign it to an expatriate and have her/him do it alone. However, through better planning of work, these so-called urgent assignments should decrease over time.

### **Reviewing compensation packages for TA**

There are serious motivational problems that arise when expatriates are paid far more than their national counterparts. In some highly technical fields, this may be unavoidable.

In others, where relatively low-cost expertise can be fielded, these problems should be addressed. African governments should make a vigorous effort to tap professional networks in countries with low rates of professional compensation and surplus capacity, such as India, the Philippines, etc. South Africa is a unique case. On the one hand, it is recruiting African expatriate professionals as a short-term expedient to help give a black face to South African organizations. Yet at the same time, it has highly-skilled white professionals in some technical fields.

### **Scrutinizing Contract Appointment and Extensions**

In many cases, experts are fielded without interviews or reference checks, and the results are predictably negative. Professional search firms should be retained, particularly in the low-cost countries listed above. They could help prepare a short-list of candidates for each TA position, interview each candidate, and transmit a record of the interviews and their recommendations to the sponsoring ministry and donor.

More rigorous scrutiny should also be given to contract extensions of TA staff presently working in Africa. In many cases, it would be desirable to go through the same recruitment process in approving a contract extension, as for a new recruitment. In other words, at least two new candidates should be considered for a position (that is due to fall vacant) in addition to the incumbent, to ensure that the incumbent is the best qualified candidate available, and represents the best value for money. A major contributor to low productivity of TA comes from the ability of TA staff to roll over their contracts many times, based more on personal contacts than on accomplishment.

## Viewing Labour Markets from a Regional Perspective

A major problem for professional capacity building in African governments are the attractive opportunities in neighbouring countries in public and private sector, and in donor agencies. Increasingly, government professional staff given advanced training at public expense are being snapped up soon after they complete their training. Thus the African governments subsidize other organizations which might otherwise themselves have to incur the cost of training.

This is not a problem unique to Africa. Poor countries and regions throughout the world have difficulties matching the compensation and quality of life of better off countries and regions, and thus suffer from exodus of scarce professionals.

This problem can only be tackled on a regional basis. Richer countries need to address at a policy level the consequences (on poorer neighbours) of their professional recruitment. Innovative solutions are needed.

One solution worth considering is the establishment and constant updating of databases on professional manpower. For example, the Government of Eritrea maintains a database of over 15,000 Eritrean professionals working outside Eritrea. Whenever the government needs the services of a consultant, it checks the database for Eritrean expatriates with appropriate skills. The donor agency concerned is then asked to recruit these Eritreans for the assignment. In some cases, a few consultants decide, with external financial assistance, to relocate to Eritrea on a permanent basis.

## Conclusion

There is a tidal wave of change rushing through Africa, and governments are hard at work to keep up. African officials are risking their careers, and sometimes their lives, for going up against the *status quo*. Yet despite all the work and all the risk, the results are slow in coming, and are often very different from what was intended. Donor agencies trying to support these changes need lots of patience, and lots of trust. This paper provides a glimpse of the challenges facing Africa in the process of designing and implementing CSR. If the few lessons highlighted in the paper are heeded by governments and by the donors, the chances are good that the move towards meritocracy, as well as towards economic and political liberalization will yield rich dividends.

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## CRITICAL ISSUES IN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT (1997): A REVIEW

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*James Katorobo*

This is a short review of Eric Kashambuzi's book entitled *Critical Issues in African Development*. It is published by Rivercross Publishing, Inc. of New York and is sold at US\$18.95. The central assumption in Eric Kashambuzi's *Critical Issues in African Development* is that the failures of African development can largely be attributed to faulty public policies. The inadequacies of public policies are demonstrated by a detailed analysis of four critical issues of food insecurity, population growth, external debt and environmental degradation.

The basic structure of the book is, first, a discussion of general themes of food insecurity in chapter 1, the political economy of population in chapter 2, population and development in chapter 3, and debt, adjustment and deforestation in chapter 4. Second, these thematic chapters containing the generic policy analysis framework are followed by three case studies on *Zambia: poverty, society and development* in Chapter 5, on *South Africa: agriculture, poverty and environment* in chapter 6, and *South Africa: education, employment and income* in chapter 7.

While the thematic analysis is wide-ranging, there are several recurrent issues that are emphasized. Inadequate data and information stifle the construction of appropriate policies. Indeed poor databases have been a key iceberg to African policy making. Public policies have suffered from failure to adequately take into account the attitudes and cultural norms of those affected by the policies. A good example is family planning programmes that are insensitive to attitudes of African women. Structural adjustment policies have been counterproductive. They have widened and deepened poverty and have led to environmental deterioration and degradation. The author espouses the need for policies that involve the broad participation of a diversity of social groups and local communities, especially the women and the youth. The author attributes African stagnation and underdevelopment to irresponsible and unaccountable governments of the colonial and post-colonial period. He sees hope in the recent wave of democratization in Africa:

*"To conclude, stable, transparent and accountable government is a vital element of economic growth and development. So are education, health and food security. These are the pillars on which successful development stands" (Kashambuzi, P. 38)*

The themes are then explored in the context of detailed case studies taken from Zambia and South Africa. The lesson from the Zambia case is that trickle down policies based on mining and import substitution have failed, *"the elite community has continued to enjoy a large share of the national economy while poverty has increased"* (Kashambuzi, P. 129). The condition of many Zambians living in towns has deteriorated due to rising unemployment and declining purchasing power. The fundamental role of women and youth in the Zambia economy has not been fully recognized. Environmental degradation has accelerated. Decision-making has remained top down and dominated by external influences. Prostitutes succumb to unprotected sex because of the *"need to survive, rather than ignorance"* (Kashambuzi, P. 133)

The two cases from South Africa demonstrate the negative effects of apartheid policies in distorting the development of agriculture and education. So-called white commercial agriculture practised on 80 per cent of the land has promoted soil erosion, and extensive use of fertilizers has resulted in highly polluted water supplies. The concentration of large populations on marginal lands in the homelands has resulted in overcrowding and overgrazing and land degradation. To the homelands *"overcrowding, overstocking and poverty, singly or in combination have wrought havoc on the environment"* (Kashambuzi, P 148)

A superficial reader may be taken aback by the absence of a concluding chapter. But on close examination each chapter ends with a conclusion and the author may have considered that a general conclusion might be repetitive. The format of each chapter is a statement and discussion of a policy issue, a review of the inappropriate policies that have been pursued, and a statement of a new programme of action, or recommendations. Nevertheless, the absence of a concluding chapter is an abrupt departure from the reader's typical expectation and may result in lack of closure.

All in all I found reading Eric Kashambuzi's book a refreshing viewpoint of an economist, demographer, and development technocrat on the analysis of public policies, which has been dominated by political scientists. The book is an indispensable reference for those concerned with poverty, degradation and humiliation that is the lot of the African continent.

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Typeset by Winga Designs, P. O. Box 21455, Nairobi, Kenya  
Printed by The Regal Press (K) Ltd, P. O. Box 46166, Nairobi, Kenya