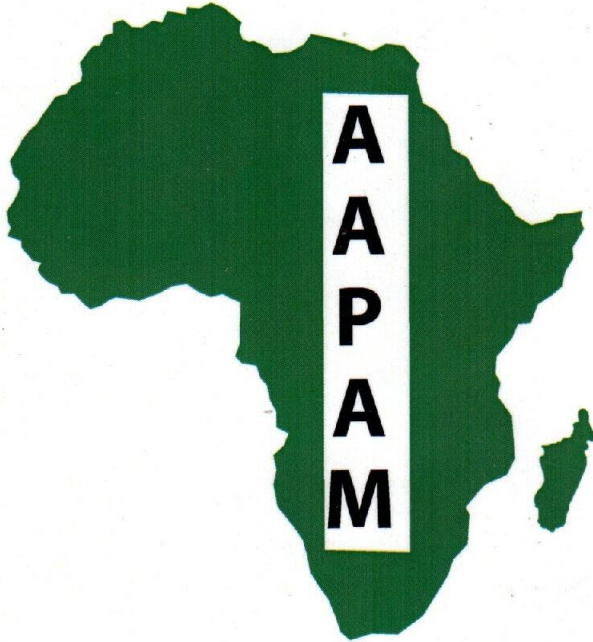


African Association for Public Administration and Management

## AAPAM Testimonial Lecture



### **Innovation and Change in Public Service: the Leadership Factor**

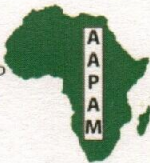
**Prof . Stephen Adei**

# AAPAM TESTIMONIAL LECTURE

**Innovation and Change in Public Service: The Leadership Factor**

Prof . Stephen Adei

AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND  
MANAGEMENT (AAPAM)



ASSOCIATION AFRICAINE POUR  
L'ADMINISTRATION PUBLIQUE  
ET LE MANAGEMENT (AAAPM)

**African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM)**

## Testimonial Lecture

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# **African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM)**

## **Foreword**

This is the third lecture in a series of AAPAM Testimonial Lectures. The Lecture was delivered by Prof. Adei at the 35<sup>th</sup> Roundtable Conference in Kigali Rwanda on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2013. The first Testimonial Lecture was delivered by Joseph Rugumyambeto at the 28<sup>th</sup> AAPAM roundtable Conference that was held in Arusha, Tanzania in December 2006. The second Testimonial Lecture was delivered by Hon. Dr. Pointso Sekatle in at the 30<sup>th</sup> AAPAM Roundtable conference in Accra Ghana on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

The AAPAM Testimonial Lecture was established in 2006 as part of the AAPAM Awards and Recognition Programme to recognize the special contribution to public service in Africa. It is delivered by a high level retiring or retired public servants. The purpose of the Lecture is to provide a forum for the recognized person to address a distinguished audience at the AAPAM Roundtable Conference on a topic about which he/she is considered to be an authority. The Testimonial Lecture is an honor bestowed by AAPAM on the individual as a public tribute to that individual and his/her achievements.

The Lecture is normally given at the end of ones career in the public service and is intended to reflect on the achievements of, and lessons learnt from, that career. Prof. Adei had distinguished career in the public service notably at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). Under his leadership, between 2000 and 2008 GIMPA was transformed from a small, under-resourced and subverted Institute in 1999 to the most successful organization under the Government of Ghana's Public Sector reform.

# AAPAM TESTIMONIAL LECTURE

Innovation and Change in Public Service:

The Leadership Factor

by Prof. Stephen Adei

At the African Association for Public Administration (AAPAM)

Roundtable Conference,

Kigali, Rwanda on 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2013

Innovation and Change in Public Service - The Leadership Factor:

“Leadership is cause, everything else is effect”.

*“Leadership is cause, everything else is effect”.*

*Honorable Guests,*

*AAPAM President,*

*Distinguished Guests,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

## Introduction

It was a humbling experience for me to be invited to deliver this year's testimonial lecture at the November forum of distinguished public servants (both academic and practitioners) and other stakeholders having retired from the public service for five years. Having read the preamble of a former lecture by Hon. Dr. Pentso Sekatle who noted that "Testimonial lecture is an honour bestowed by AAPAM on the individual as a public tribute to that individual and his/her achievements", I feel privileged to give a testimonial lecture. However, based on Hon. Dr. Sekatle's observations, I felt I was not qualified. If I had read these remarks earlier, I would have turned down the invitation, however, honestly speaking I only came across them as I was putting this lecture together. I don't think I fall into the top class of public administrators or luminaries' category.

As a Christian, I have tried to please my Lord Jesus Christ in any role that I have been privileged to serve. That has included being a school teacher, very briefly as an officer in the Ministry of Finance of Ghana, for twelve and a half years as an Investment Promotion Officer within the now Ghana Investment Promotion Center, rising to the level of Deputy Director, three years as Senior Economist at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, eleven and half years as an Economist, Manager and Diplomat with United Nations Development Programme (During this time I visited most Anglophone African countries and served as head of United Nations System in South Africa for five exciting months at the beginning of the country's transition from Apartheid to democratic dispensation, for four and half years as UNDP Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator in Namibia) and finally nine years as Director General and later Rector of the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) teaching paripasu as Professor of Economics and Leadership. In all these cases, I think I only did my duty as an employee and bureaucratic leader.

If there is one message I would like to share with you especially with the young professional public servants, it is that from all my experience in these roles I have found that character, professional competence and care for others will carry you through all circumstances and you will succeed as a public servant at the national or international levels without regret. Never seek honours, but rather to serve.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, this testimonial lecture focused on the leadership factor in innovation and change in public service. I will draw examples from around the world but principally, I will share my experience as the CEO of GIMPA for nine years from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2000 to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2008, when "life began at 60"! And I mean just that. My personal ambition is that between age 60 and 70, by the grace of God, I will have accomplished more than I did in my 35 years of public service counting from when I graduated with my first master's degree.

I am almost mid-way through that ten year vision as I turn sixty-five (65) in less than a month. Each year, I monitor my progress on my eight-point radar of spiritual, marital, family, professional (I am a full time professor now), intellectual, social, financial and physical life. You can see that I am so excited with life; I don't believe my greatest achievement is in the past. Besides, I have had to nurse my wife who was very sick for four years. This is part of the reason why I have been lost at AAPAM meetings. But the last five years have been exciting as I am doing the things I love to do and I am now free from being a full time public servant.

I chose my topic because, I know many of you will be interested in the GIMPA story more than, say Ghana Christian International High School which is now the top most rated school in Ghana, which my wife and I are facilitating and have the joy of being a grandfather, or being on course to earn as much as I did in thirty-five years as public servant. Since many of you would like to hear the story of "how to be rich and holy" with a zero tolerance to corruption. As a public servant, let me say that any of you who invests ten

percent of their limited resources wisely can be a millionaire without taking a dollar bribe by the time they retire if they start early. Then you can stand tall, even if as in my case, on two occasions my detractors caused the whole Audit Service of Ghana to undertake forensic audits on my watch because they found nothing to censure.

In my book, "Twelve Keys to Financial Success" (which I prepared originally as a Sunday school material for my congregation at Teaneck, New Jersey when I served with the UNDP in New York), I outline a well-known 10:10:80 principle. The secret for a public servant to achieve financial independence by sharing 10% of their income with others be it their religious group, extended family or those in need (to cure us of self-centered living); spending 10% consistently on wise and profitable investment; and living within 80% of earnings. One is to reduce the latter (80%) as your income rises and not as we often do, by allowing our expenditure to rise proportionately or faster as our income grows. The middle 10% invested wisely with consistency, time and compound interest grow. To become a millionaire one needs as low as \$120 a month invested for 25 years and earning 20% per annum on it. Most African public servants will be happy retiring with \$250,000 lump sum besides their pension.

I think it is the failure to teach wise personal financial management that accounts for corruption in public service of my country and many parts of Africa and that pains me greatly.

For the rest of the time however, let me devote my attention to my announced topic of "Innovation and Change in Public Service: The Leadership Factor".

## Brief General Background

With a firm promise not to turn a testimonial lecture into an academic discourse, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, permit me to make a brief detour to broach the literature on innovation, change and leadership.

Whether, we are talking about individuals, organizations or nations, change is inevitable. Political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors ensure that. We are all familiar with these variables in the literature on change management in private business. The same factors apply to the public sector with similar factors directly impacting our work.

Change in government with or without different ideology differences and the changing global and regional contexts affect public administration. Sometimes having the same administration and leadership staying too long shifts the focus from development to preservation of regime as we have experienced in many parts of Africa. Even where the political context is ideal, sheer population growth and demand of dwindling resources require that we change and innovate to do more with less resource. The answer is innovation or successful exploitation of new ideas, not just being creative but following through to implement change which may be incremental or transformational.

Today, many African countries are engulfed with high levels of youth unemployment and there is no way we can do business as usual without paradigm shifts in government and development practice. Globalization and its “contents” and “discontents” (Stiglitz, 2002) have opened new challenges with Africa’s embryonic manufacturing sector being destroyed by cheap imports from other countries. We can no longer count on old time import substitution strategy. At the same time, globalization is opening opportunities for leap flogging in education, health, etc. (ibid). For example, application of technology in service delivery is potent in fighting corruption by reducing human contact.

“Innovation in public sector organization is now recognized as a vital factor in meeting the challenges of globalization and demographic changes, while at the same time sustaining a high level of service to citizens and businesses” (Agolla and Lill, 2003). In order for our countries to meet the demands of delivering quality service, create new jobs and sustainable livelihoods; deal with social, environmental and emerging security challenges including cyber fraud and endemic public sector corruption, we need to think outside the box and innovate (OECD, 2013; Aubert 2005). In short, we need novel ideas and apply them to create new products and services and energize existing systems in order to generate value for the citizenry. As articulated in MAC-APS report ([www.google.com.qb/#q=management+advisory+committee+australian+service](http://www.google.com.qb/#q=management+advisory+committee+australian+service)), a diverse range of barriers confront public sector innovation including risk aversion, failure of leadership, resource constraints, lack of direction and measurement, policy conflicts, hierarchical attitudes, mentality, legislative limitation, accountability concerns, and resistance to change. Thus public sector innovation requires stronger and more effective leadership.

The challenge is to undertake innovation in the public sector and change without unduly destabilizing the current system. This is where the work of Govindarajan (2010) is helpful in leading change. He emphasizes the need to ensure that current operations are sustained while identifying change levers and planning a transformed future. How then to be successful is the task in effective leadership which authors like Kouzes and Posner (2007) and Kotter have developed into an art. For example, Kotter articulates eight (8) points in leading which includes casting vision, forming a guiding coalition and communicating the plan effectively. What makes life difficult in managing change in public services is that the principal agents namely, our political masters and the typical public servants are for a good reason risk averse. Neither wants to risk failure in the full glare of the public. That makes innovation in public service twice more difficult. Thus change and innovation in public service does not come easy even though the change drivers may look the same- strategy, organizational climate, strategic leadership, entrepreneurship and organizational resources

(Marr, 2009). In the public service innovation, while incentives and reward have a role to play, the key driver is public benefit. This raises powerful barriers particularly the political risk and public scrutiny (MAC-AP op.cit). This may account for the limited impact of public service reforms in many African countries especially when driven from external sources.

Moreover, in public sector reforms, the government plays a much important role as an external driver. The government is an important determinant of innovation and reform in public service as it makes the policies (though we public servants influence them). The government equally forms the overall development agenda, effect specific regulations and standards on taxation, procurement among others. Governments therefore can either provide the impetuses for public sector change and innovation or constraint them (OECD, 2010).

Yet, the scope for innovation is limitless in public service. Innovation can be achieved through a wide range of means including: service, systems and process improvements, organizational structures, partnerships, horizontal integration, devolution and decentralization, regulatory change and the use of Information Technology (IT).

Certainly, the purpose of public sector innovation is effective service delivery and less costly services (Baxter et al, [www.steria.uk.co](http://www.steria.uk.co)). That is why we should not be daunted by the barriers to innovation such as resistance to change and risk aversion. The essence of leadership is to confront the status quo, cast new vision, manage resistance and inertia and generate transformation.

## The Leadership Factor in Change and Innovation in the Public Sector

Distinguished delegates, there is no doubt that "leadership is cause, everything else is effect" (Adei, 2004). Leadership is a critical factor in creating more innovations in the public sector. There is a lot to learn from the leadership literature though much of the literature on leadership has unduly focused on the private sector. New Public Management has tried to introduce private sector norms into the public sector but often overlook the leadership role in private sector transformation (Adei& Badu, 2006). In recent times however, change and innovation in public service is gaining prominence.

The emphasis on leadership for Public Managers is on how to change their attitude and manage their organizations like their counter parts in the private sector, while bearing in mind that they are accountable to the general public and government (Agolla and Lill 2003). Public interest rather than profit drives public service but efficiency (the essence of good management) and strategic influence of people to achieve transformation (leadership) are needed in both realms. Better leadership is even more needed in public service because the variables dealt with are more complex, the stakeholders more diverse, and leadership must be exercised at three levels – political, individual and institutional levels thus adding more complexity. Therefore the idea that the private sector needs more top rated leaders is fallacious. In my entire career all of which was in the public sector, I never considered myself as second fiddle to corporate CEO's. I had to learn my principles from the private sector-based literature and adapt them to the public sector context.

Leadership is critical for public sector innovation. But by leadership we are not talking about people who rise through the ranks by just being faithful to the status quo. When we say we want more leadership in the public sector, what we are really looking for are people who will promote institutional adaptations in the public interest (OECD 2001). The importance of public sector leadership in OECD countries like the UK, Norway, USA and

Australia is demonstrated by the conscious effort to build public service leadership through comprehensive strategies, setting up leadership development institutions and linking existing management to leadership training. Those countries define competence profiles for future leaders, identify and select potential leaders, encourage their mentoring and training and keep leadership development sustainable (ibid). The demands for excellence in public administration to oversee effective management of public resources and deliver quality services to citizenry require strong and ethical leadership "to clarify objectives, develop strategies, deploy resources, coordinate activities and motive support" (CAPAM objectives: see [www.capam.org](http://www.capam.org)).

The good news is that increasingly public servants are now among the good practitioners of innovation and change management. To have an idea of innovation and change management stirred by public servants, you may want to read "*Innovation in the Public Sector: Enabling Better Performance, Driving New Directions*" by the Australian National Audit Office or Deloitte and Harvard Kennedy School's, "*The Public Innovators Play Book: Nurturing Bold Ideas in Government*". Time will not permit a survey of innovations that have turned the public services of Canada, UK, New Zealand and Singapore to be among the most innovative, efficient organizations in their respective countries. Africa has not missed the boat. Botswana for example is one country that has for years now successfully implemented a performance management system with the political and bureaucratic leadership committed to ensure efficiency and quality service delivery (Nkhwa, 2003). Time will not allow me to go over African success stories like the legendary Ethiopian Airlines, ICTs in secondary schools in Senegal, election reforms in South Africa, Public Reporting in Mauritius etc. (see ECA, 2003 for good African innovation in public service).

I know for certain that our host country, Rwanda, has used technology to improve their immigration service especially passport and visa services and already their health services are improving at rates unknown in most parts of the continent through innovation. But, I don't

want to dwell much on Rwanda as Africans sometimes feel embarrassed when put on the pedestal. But let me say that this is a country going somewhere because of the quality of its political leadership, commitment and discipline of its public service and willingness to innovate. I salute his Excellency Paul Kagame and the Rwandan public service for that.

## **Innovation Change and Leadership in the Ghanaian Public Service**

Like most African countries, my country has had generations of public service reforms, which I have summarized in my contribution to the book "Ghana: Governance in the Fourth Republic" (Agyemeng-Duah, 2008). Much of the reforms, however, yielded limited results. Factors such as ineffective leadership and poor management, low morale and negative corporate image of public servants, lack of political will and undue external influence, have all contributed negatively. As I talk to you, under a single spine pay policy, public servants have doubled their salaries without limited impact on efficient service delivery.

However, my country has also chalked some tremendous innovative successes albeit with their own challenges. These include: ongoing decentralization, which my colleague Prof. Kwamena Ahwoi and I made presentations on this forum two years ago (Offei Aboagye, 2008). We have also successfully introduced a National Health Insurance Service and School Feeding Programme to enhance enrollment at the primary level. We need to learn to celebrate our achievements to spur further innovation without executing our shortcomings.

One of the good things AAPAM is doing is the recognition of innovative management in Africa. This they carry through the Innovative management Award (IMA) for distinctively innovative public institutions. Secondly, through the Gold Award given to individuals who have made distinct contributions in the public sector of which individuals such as my senior Professors Adebayo Adedeji of Nigeria, G. R. Muhataba of Tanzania and Malcom Willis of South Africa have been awarded. AAPAM has brought recognition to the online visa entry

in Rwanda, innovative Community based response to HIV/ AIDS in Swaziland, administrative reforms in Mauritius and delivery of community water through management of boreholes in Ghana, to name but just a few examples of African innovations in the public service. The more we celebrate innovation the more innovation we will see.

From 1994, Ghana attempted to transform the public service through a National Institution Renewal Programme (NIRP). Under it, some public organizations were to be privatized, commercialized or have their operations improved. You could sense new public management principle in the programme. As usual the impetus and funding came from the World Bank. However, very little attention was given to indigenous and institutional leadership. In a nutshell, as a result very little transformation occurred in the 200 plus institutions targeted by the programme. But the programme gave legitimacy to the transformation of Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) which I was privileged to lead for nine years. We took advantage of that umbrella to innovate and caused an unprecedented paradigm shift in the management development institute; this was the only successful story under that programme. The GIMPA story is a demonstration of how innovative thinking, change management and leadership combined to deliver results in the public sector hitherto associated with the best of private sector. What was accomplished in GIMPA has inspired probably quarter success elsewhere. I have had the privilege of observing other management development institutes in Africa follow the same path and I have no doubt that the likes of Kenya Institute of Administration (now Kenya School of Government) today are poised to improve on our record.

# The Transformation of GIMPA: An Example of Innovation, Change and Leadership in Public Service.

## Background of GIMPA

GIMPA was established in 1961 as the "Institute of Public Administration" (IPA) as part of Ghana's first President's ambition to deliver development with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme. It was re-designated Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) in 1969, to reflect the expanded mandate to train managers not only in the public sector but also in other sectors of the economy. It remained essentially a public service college however; a 1985 review reaffirmed the general management training in public and private sectors of the economy by GIMPA. In 1994, the Government initiated a National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP) to transform all public sector organizations. The aim of this programme was to make organizations more efficient through privatization, commercialization or transformation within the public sector. GIMPA's transformation had its initial momentum from that programme which gave it some legitimacy. Our efforts were so successful that in 2004, a new legislation was passed, GIMPA Law 2004 (Act 676) making it both a Management Development Institute (MDI) and a specialized University for training Leadership, Public Management, Business Administration and Technology. To appreciate the transformation that took place in GIMPA between January 2000 and December 2008 we have to understand the state of the Institute at the end of 1999.

Positively GIMPA had some points in its favour including:

- ❖ Relatively good buildings and excellent location.
- ❖ Aging, small number (about twenty-four), but experienced teaching faculty.

- ❖ Partly self-financing up to 50% though at a low of one million dollars.
- ❖ A brand and known name – GIMPA though only with the Civil Service.
- ❖ Some limited tested products in public administration certificate and diploma courses. They had started a Master's in Programme Development Management with the University of Ghana next door.
- ❖ Mature and experienced Board (Court of Governors) desiring transformation.

However, the above positive steps notwithstanding the institute was in trouble and in fact under the NIRP programme, the government had decided to privatize it (sell it). Worse still, GIMPA's programmes then were not seen as responding to clients' needs (private sector and Civil Service). As a result, from about 1995 the Civil Service had declared that GIMPA's training was not necessary for promotion and had in de-facto, stopped sending staff for upgrading and capacity building. With no alternative provision, for nearly a decade senior cadres of Ghana civil servants lacked systematic capacity building. The situation was such that in 2008, transformational GIMPA was contracted by the government with World Bank support to provide an accelerated training for the top echelon Ghana's public servants from Assistant Directors to Chief Directors (Permanent Secretaries equivalent) for the entire service, bringing in about forty (40) at a time for 3 weeks. Other features of GIMPA at December 1999 were:

- ❖ Highly demoralized staff and faculty.
- ❖ Poor conditions of service provision.
- ❖ Threat of privatization.
- ❖ Poor Finances.
- ❖ Overstaffed non-teaching workers having 1:10 Faculty: Other Staff ratio.

- ❖ Poor and ineffective leadership for the best part of two decades.
- ❖ Indiscipline, uncooperative faculty.
- ❖ Virtual conversion of GIMPA for private gain of faculty – so called “galamsey”.
- ❖ Low patronage of programmes.
- ❖ The only innovation in 20 years was the Masters in Development programme course run for University of Ghana but participants had fallen to three (3) students in 1999.

### **Transformation Imperative of GIMPA: A Situation Ripe for Deep Change**

There was a convergence of factors that would allow for deep change and innovation with the right leadership.

- ❖ The imperative of the critical situation in 1999 demanded major transformation of GIMPA.
- ❖ The mandate provided by the National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP) was there initially under which about 38 public sector organizations were selected to be reformed, as the first step in building a new public service of Ghana; GIMPA was one of these organizations except that it was to be privatized
- ❖ The year 2000 was an election year and politicians had other pre-occupations to mind the fallout of GIMPA's change management and I took full advantage of it.

## **Appointment by court of Governors a new Director General (CEO) outside the norm**

If there is any group of people to whom the success story of GIMPA is to be dedicated to it is the Board, (then called the Court of Governors) who were bold enough to appoint me as Director General breaking a 40-year tradition.

- I was not a local civil servant or drawn from the GIMPA staff as was the case of every CEO for almost 40 years apart from the founding Director who was UNDP technical assistance personnel from India.
  - I had clear vision and agenda to transform GIMPA into a world class self-financing center of excellence for training national political leaders, captains of industry as well as bureaucratic leaders from the public service, and they did not throw me out especially the chairman Dr. B. K. Mensah.
  - “Leadership is cause, everything else is effect”.
- ❖ How for years these gallant men and women sat on a declining institute beat my mind. They were who is who in Ghana. It confirms the saying that a bunch of sheep led by a lion is stranger than a bunch of lions led by a sheep. They were delighted and allowed me unprecedented scope to innovate and transform GIMPA.

## **Major Innovation and Change Actions spearheaded in GIMPA**

For lack of time in one testimonial lecture I will present the major drivers and actions that transformed GIMPA.

- ❖ Leadership vision, commitment and modeling.
- ❖ Communication of a simple vision of creating a Centre of Excellence with clear goals in terms of faculty development, financial autonomy, condition of service etc.

- ❖ Improvement in all supporting services especially hospitality and ICT.
- ❖ Applied for accreditation of all GIMPA degree and post-graduate programmes. GIMPA was the only public higher learning institution in the country to meet National Accreditation Board standards.
- ❖ We secured the passage of a new GIMPA Law, (Act 676, 2004) making GIMPA both a Management Development Institute (MDI) and a specialized University.
- ❖ We became the institution of choice in public management, and won a contract running from ACBF to offer Master's degree programme in public management for Anglophone West Africa. In less than five years, we had succeeded in creating a "Leadership" brand, such that in Ghana the word 'Excellence' came to be associated with GIMPA.

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## Some of the Results

- There was more than 2,000% financial increase in turnover in seven years, from about US\$ 500, 000 in 2000 to US\$ 12,000,000.00 in 2008. GIMPA has been fully self-financing since 2001.
- Becoming the leading business school in Ghana and only one that met the criteria to become a member of Association of African Business Schools.
- Ranked among the top most schools of Public Management in Sub-Sahara Africa with a Master's degree student population of over 600 in 2008 when I left office.
- Excellent leadership training institution with unique Executive "Masters in Governance and Leadership".
- Had the best conditions of service in public tertiary schools in Ghana which was comparable to rates in the private sector.
- Significant infrastructural development. Classrooms increased by 300%, including conference facilities, ICT infrastructure, air-conditioning and 24 hours supply of electricity.
- Buildup of faculty. As at 2008, we had more qualified faculty in public administration and business than all the public Universities of Ghana put together. Even today, our faculty of business and public administration is bigger than any of the oldest public universities in Ghana.
- Over-subscription of all degree programmes at one point.
- Restored image as partner in capacity building of the Civil Service. Public servants are now proud to be part of GIMPA.

- A 4-year contract with ACBF for training public managers in all Anglophone West African Countries.
- A one hundred and thirty-one (131) room suites plus the best Presidential Suite in the country according to former President Kuffour (3-star hotel equivalent hostel) for Executive training.
- Greenhill College success is unprecedented. It had nearly 2,000 adult participants in evening degree programmes in 2008.
- We innovated the first ever Higher National Diploma (HND) top-up degree programmes in the country.
- Enrolment of 15% of Ghana's Parliamentarians in our degree and post-graduate Governance Leadership programmes.
- An institution H.E. The President and his whole Cabinet regularly use for their residential retreats as well as the whole Legislature of Liberia felt comfortable enough to come for orientation for one week after their 2006 election. Since 2008, the executive of the governments come to GIMPA for their orientation week though they bring most of the facilitators themselves.
- More than 100% increase in participants completing programmes from 592 in 1998/1999 to 1,437 in 2006/2007.

## Does GIMPA Remain a Management Development Institute of Public Service College?

Is GIMPA still an MDI and still focusing on training of public servants? This is a legitimate question I can answer for my tenure. I say my tenure because my two successors so far are pure University Professors with no background in public service and left to them, they could turn it into what they know best. However, if that happens, I have the council to blame. As a person who drafted the GIMPA law in 2004, I made sure that the Head of Civil Service and Chairman of Public Services Commission places on the board were entrenched.

- ❖ GIMPA is currently both an MDI (Public Services School) of Ghana and a specialized university for training in leadership, public management, business administration and ICT. My aim was to create a GIMPA with two 'legs'; that is, in order to preserve the integrity of public services training, GIMPA was organized into semi-autonomous schools of Public Administration, Graduate School of Leadership and Governance, Business Management, School of Technology and School of Law. We also have a consultancy service and second-to-none hospitality school and industry in the country. GIMPA Public Services School is an MDI dedicated to in-service training of Civil Servants mainly with its own Dean and dedicated faculty.
- ❖ The expansion into other related disciplines (Leadership, business management and ICT) has rather brought several advantages to the GIMPA's Public Services School including:
  - Its ability to draw on expertise of the eighty seven (87)-strong faculty of GIMPA as a whole.
  - Subsidization of the Public Services School.

- By association with enlarged GIMPA, the Public Services School built its capacity and regained its place among the top public service training organizations in Africa.
- The School does not have to charge market rates. For example, for six years, fees were not increased because GIMPA could afford cross subsidization and all the faculty of the GIMPA public service earn the same package as everybody else.
- Sharing improved training environment including ICT.

The arrangement allows for bringing traditional business school programmes such as Strategy to be part of on public service training.

Today GIMPA's Public Service School not only attracts training and consultancy contracts from other countries in the sub-region, but was awarded a US\$1.4 million dollar contract in 2006 by the Government of Ghana to retrain the top echelon of Ghana's Civil Service. The School's leadership played a vital advisory role in public sector reform in the country.

## Success Factors

Let me briefly summarize what I consider were the success factors in the GIMPA story.

- ❖ Government's reform umbrella giving legitimacy to GIMPA's change management.
- ❖ Court of Governors (Council) support.
- ❖ Improved leadership and management.
- ❖ Building of a strong, capable and goal oriented management team.
- ❖ Improvement in range and quality of programmes driven by customer demand.
- ❖ Recruitment of qualified and respected faculty.
- ❖ Cultural change especially in work ethic.
- ❖ Improved conditions of service.
- ❖ Risk taking especially going for commercial loans to improve infrastructure.

However, I think the GIMPA public service school risks being overwhelmed by the programmes. In fact, the school has been merged with the Graduate School of Governance and Leadership. That could be a slippery slope but if that happens blame the Head of the Civil Service and Chairman of Public Services Commission and not Stephen Adei.

- ❖ Innovation (e.g. Major programmes made sandwich and drawing on a pool of international faculty of adjunct lecturers).
- ❖ Prudent financial management – motivated by having to be self-financing.
- ❖ Legislative backing.

## Major Challenges for the Future

1. Governance: Appointment of good boards (Council) in future. Kindly note that, "The fish rots from the head".
2. Future CEO: The fear is that a new CEO may not fail to continue the change management but turn GIMPA into only a typical university and play second fiddle to the big University of Ghana next door instead of being an excellent MDI. Also a strong management team is being put in place.
3. Not sustaining quality assurance especially maintaining standards of teaching and of programmes and in the case of business school going for international accreditation which I had initiated.
4. Not compromising on management right to hire and fire solely on the objective appraisal system.
5. Ability to expand infrastructure to meet demands. For example a planned blue print to build a separate undergraduate school to maintain the sanctity of the public service school and Graduate programme remain on the back burner and approved PhD. Programme has not been implemented.
6. Avoidance of pre-mature freezing of change management.
7. Government not seeing GIMPA as a public asset and supporting it to improve. Current attitude is that GIMPA is okay and does not need support to improve (a recipe for anachronism).
8. Getting support of Government bodies such as National Commission for Tertiary Education and Ghana Educational Trust Fund as they find it difficult to place GIMPA as a public university or public service schools.

9. Complacency on part of the Management and staff as they get regular flow

10. Failure to elaborate a new strategic vision and plan that is motivating.

All the above challenges however, can be reduced to one: Getting innovative change leaders- CEO and Council- to take GIMPA to higher levels, not resting on their oars and becoming anachronistic as typical of many African governments and institutions. Since I retired, even when a meeting of GIMPA retirees was called, I was neither invited nor was my name mentioned in the brochure. '*Hakuna matata*' as the Swahili speakers will say meaning "No worries". I am enjoying myself too much to bother except that recently someone shared with me a brochure of the gathering months after it.

### **Implications of the GIMPA Story for Public Sector Reform (Transferable Concepts)**

GIMPA is, in a sense, unique in background and context. Not everything we did would apply elsewhere. What lessons from GIMPA's story then are transferable and useful for other MDIs and Public Sector Reform? I will say a few.

- ✓ Transformation requires thinking out of the box. Balancing, maintaining, challenging the status quo and creating the future.
- ✓ Government support is the key. While often the administration of the day posed problems for GIMPA, we generally had their support.
- ✓ You need a "guiding coalition" or a committed change management team. Bring in a critical mass of new staff if the situation demands.
- ✓ Don't start any serious reform unless the leadership of the institution is committed and capable.

- ✓ A good board is a jewel; a bad one is like a tooth-ache! GIMPA has experienced both.
- ✓ Define and limit the role of external consultants. (Recommend “process consultants” who challenge management but do not seek to do the reform themselves. Reform does not succeed when driven by outsiders. If managers are incompetent, change them).
- ✓ A good board (Council) that respects the norms of modern corporate governance is most important.
- ✓ Clear targets and action plan (strategic framework) and sticking to them are important.
- ✓ The most difficult part of reform is cultural change (attitudes, time management, and performance appraisal). Stakeholders (especially Government and board) must be willing to back the leaders up when blackmail, insults and even death threats occur as they will in the third world context.
- ✓ The role of effective communication with internal and external clients is vital. (I as a leader of GIMPA often goofed there).
- ✓ Managing resistance and opposition is part of transformation and must be done effectively including dealing “surgically” with saboteurs.
- ✓ Never let go for a moment your vigilance nor celebrate achievement too early. It takes a long time to succeed even though you cannot afford showing first fruits quickly to get the license to continue.

## What could have been done differently?

I will not end by admitting that some things could have been done differently or better, all though sometimes, I doubt whether the same results could have been achieved. The following come to mind as to areas could have inspired especially as the leader.

- ✦ We should have anticipated the backlash associated with change management adequately and prepared better to manage it.
- ✦ Better communication with staff especially towards the end.
- ✦ A less abrasive management style would have left lesser bruises and problems of the leader.
- ✦ More rigorous recruitment from the start. All subsequent troubles arose from early recruitment that was less rigorous.
- ✦ Much aggressive improvement in systems and infrastructure, not leaving much to successors such as building a modern undergraduate College and implementing a PhD programme.
- ✦ Better succession planning, even though one is constrained in public service of Ghana as elsewhere. You don't determine your successor and I got badly bruised in advising my council that their preferred success was likely to be incompetent as a leader and had serious moral lapses.

But the question is: would doing things differently have achieved the same results? GIMPA remains the only success story among the thirty eight (38) institutions under the first tranche of NIRP reforms. We demonstrated with good change management, quantum improvement is possible in organizations including the public sector. The GIMPA story is all about all about successful change management: vision, creativity,

innovation and rigorous change management carried the day. "Leadership is cause; everything else is effect" (Adei 2004).

## CONCLUSION

In my culture one of the hardest things is for you to talk about yourself. It is a taboo. But AAPAM has forced me to change and be innovative.

In fact, two books are in the making because strangely I am being asked to tell my story and so with my "cemetery flowers" I won't be around to tell it often. So I have just completed a manuscript titled "The Sky is the Limit", behind which I am hiding my autobiography. I am also author on the "The GIMPA story". I hope to get those out of the way in six (6) months to get on with the more exciting stuff of implementing my "Life begins at 60" adventures.

Let me therefore conclude by saying that public services in Africa must innovate and undergo positive change or service delivery will deteriorate; corruption will worsen as demand for service exceed supply, and many countries will revert into political, social, and economic crises we hoped was in the past. Yes we can! Hope will not be a forgotten past. Yes we can!

The scope for innovation and positive change are plentiful in public service. What is needed is visionary, transformational, and political, service oriented wide institutional leadership. This is because "leadership is cause, everything else is effect". My concluding remarks are my favorite quotation of Myles Munroe "Whenever a nation has lack of quality, legitimate and just leaders, national deterioration occurs.... Quality leadership is a key to a prosperous and peaceful life and nation... It is obvious that our nations are painfully in need of such leaders...God's answer to all our social, moral and economic problems is qualified and righteous leaders" (Myles Munroe, 1993).

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you.

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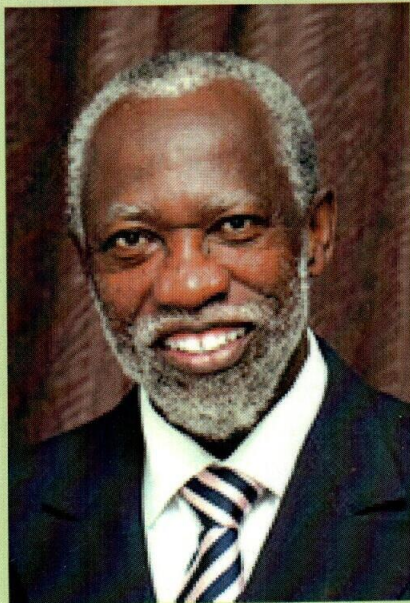
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## About the author

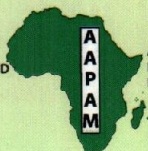


### **Prof. Stephen Adei**

Prof. Stephen Adei holds a PhD (Econs, Sydney), MSc (Strathclyde), BSc. (Legon), and Bachelor of Divinity (London), Masters in Theology (UNISA), Fellow Chartered Institute of Marketing (FCIMG), ACIS and Diploma in Marriage Counselling. He is an expert in Leadership, Public Management, Finance, Economics, Marketing and Marriage Counselling. Since 2009 he is Professor of Economic and Leadership at Pentecost University College Accra.

Between January, 2000 and December 2008 he was the Director General and the Rector of the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). Under his leadership, between 2000 and 2008 GIMPA was transformed from a small, under-resourced and subverted Institute in 1999 to the most successful organization under the Government of Ghana's Public Sector reform.

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