



WHAT ROLE FOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTES IN AFRICA

**A PAPER PRESENTED
DURING THE BIENNIAL GENERAL MEETING**

BY

DR MARGARET KOBIA

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INTRODUCTION

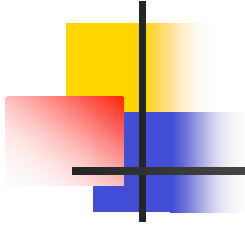


- MDIs have been part and parcel of the growth of African governments. Although they have had serious challenges impacting negatively on their performance, they still remain important pillars.

WHAT ROLE FOR MDIs IN AFRICA? (Background Information)



- Heads of African Public Services meeting in London (2006) focusing on the new partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) acknowledged role of the African Public Service in implementing the African initiative for economic growth and development.
- The meeting also recognized and endorsed the need to strengthen the capacity and machinery of public services in Africa to respond to global challenges.



- Further, Heads of public service in Africa forum meeting organized by ComSec recognized the role of MDI but pointed out that MDIs are not adequately responding to government's needs (July 2007).

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- The Management Development Institutes (MDI's) play a crucial role in capacitating public service employees to deliver effective service by providing management education and training;
 - They play the crucial role of Public service culturization for enhanced performance; (**Public service ethos and values**)
 - This explains why governments the world over have established and continue to invest in MDIs or what in some countries like US, UK and New Zealand is referred to as the Schools of Government.

MDI's Contribution to Enhancing Public Service Delivery



- MDI's in Africa have been heavily involved in reform. In Nigeria for example, MDI's have been involved in advancing broadened public sector reform programmes.
- MDI's play a central role in training, capacity building and knowledge transfer (Kauza, 2006 Pg.116).
- They are also logical vehicles through which new paradigm and changes in the agenda and understanding regarding public administration and public sector reform are disseminated (Abdulla and Van Dyk Robertson, June 2007).

The Case of Kenya



- Kenya Institute of Administration was established as MDI in 1961 to promote professionalism and best management practice in the public service.
- Kenya established the government training Institutes [GTIs] (what is referred to as MDIs; immediately after independence; the Institutes' initial mandate was to kenyanize the civil service after attaining independence.
- It should be appreciated that Kenya inherited a well trained, professional civil service after independence.
- Ominde S., et al (1964) underscored the role of professional training institutions in Kenya, which were vehicles through which different service organizations would develop their staff.

Continued – The case of Kenya



- Since the establishment, the Institute has played a crucial role of training and monitoring the implementation of the development strategies till 1989 when 80% of the Institute facilities were given to University of Nairobi.
- This marked the slow death of the KIA till 1996 when it was made was made a state Agency.
- Reconstruction of facilities has been slow until 2002 when the governments hasten the completion of halls and seminar rooms to accommodate 220-350 participants per day.

Challenges Facing MDI's in their Delivery Role



1. *Inadequate Resources*
2. *Relationship with Government.*
3. *Quality of Leadership*
4. *Underdeveloped ICT Infrastructure*
5. *Passive involvement in Public Policy Activities*
6. *Shift in Training Approaches*
7. *Historical Baggage*

POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS FOR MDIs

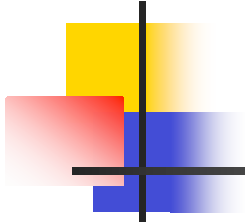


In order to improve the ability of MDIs to perform their roles more productively, it is recommended that:

- Funding arrangements should be reviewed so that MDI's continue receiving Government subsidy and at the same time generate funds for operational expenses.
- This will go along way in reducing pressure for self-sustainability that made most of MDI's abandon some of their core mandates like research and consultancy
- MDIs should develop sound and relevant training plans in which training is proactive and informed by market demands
- Effective monitoring and evaluation of training programmes should be carried out periodically to ensure new gaps in public service delivery are addressed on time

Continued – Possible Interventions for MDIS

- MDIs should urgently enhance use of ICT to increase service reach and consequent impacts on the public service.
- MDIs should move away from their traditional public business orientation to a performance based culture similar to private sector orientation
- Governments should involve the MDI's in forums to formulate policy and any discourse on critical national issues in order to enable the MDIs remain current and relevant; in essence, the visibility and influence of MDI's in public service reform management should be increased;
- MDIs should take the first step by being more proactive in responding to the needs of their countries.



- Governments should strengthen MDIs as an area of priority for performance improvement in the public service (*Commonwealth Secretariat regional workshop on PMS at KIA, 2007*)
- In the spirit of NEPAD and other regional networks for development, MDIs should move fast to create forums for peer review and development networks; a mechanism for exchange programs
- Governments should institutionalize the participation of MDIs in all spheres of influence in public sector management especially policy formulation and reform initiatives.

CONCLUSION

- African countries refocus their energies to reengineering MDIs for a reforming African continent in fast moving technological world.
- More time should be spend in benchmarking across nations in order to enhance the impact of MDIs in directing the quality of public service delivery in Africa.