

# An Assessment of the Effectiveness of Training and Development Function in Public Service Management Office in Tanzania

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*The purpose of this paper is to present finding on assessment of effectiveness of training and development function carried out in President's Office, Public Service Management (PO-PSM) in Tanzania. Data were collected through structured questionnaires, unstructured checklists and review of organisational documents within the Office. Despite a well designed training programme, the findings established that inadequate and poor allocation of training funds, unclear criteria for trainees' selection, and inability to determine type of training needed by trainee's were considered as problems of implementing training programme within the Public Service Management Office. Furthermore the results show that training and development is not frequently evaluated in order to determine what benefits it brings to the organisation. From these findings it is recommended that current training programme needs to be re-analysed and improved in order to promote transparency as well as practical implementation of training plans.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Since independence, a number of organizational changes and/reforms have been instituted at the national and regional levels, and business enterprises in Tanzania. These changes were brought out to promote efficient socio-economic development of the country. Among these changes or reforms include; Africanization or localization of the civil service and public enterprises (in the early 1960's); nationalization of major business enterprises (in 1967) and decentralization of government administration to the regions (1972) (Abdi, 2005). Also in 1980s the country experienced economic liberalisation which was brought by different programmes including Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Economic Recovery Programs (ERP) and Economic and Social Action Program (ESAP). As a result of economic liberalisation the government considers financial reforms, privatization and decentralization of government to districts as the main development agenda in Tanzania (Wangwe and Arkadie, 2000).

Within the same period, in 1989 the Government of Tanzania requested the donor community to provide assistance in carrying out a civil service reform programme. **United Nations Development Programme** (UNDP) responded positively through the project "*Strengthening Management in the Public Sector*" which was executed directly by the Government. One of the objectives was to study and recommend a National Training Policy and conduct training for those civil servants whom the government retains in its service to fulfil its stated role (UNDP, 2005). This was designed to assist civil servants in updating their skills so as to make them more efficient, effective and productive.

The need to strengthen the public sector was due to the identified problems such as overstaffing, declines in real wages, non-transparent pay systems, suboptimal organisation and management of public service functions and limited capacity in skills and administrative technologies. All these changes or reforms required massive training of management and administrative cadres in the public sector. Unfortunately they were not preceded by planned, concerted efforts to ensure that the available personnel becomes adequately trained and developed in order to assume more complex responsibilities and to increase their efficiency and effectiveness in their job performance (Fjeldstad, et.al., 2002). Until early 1990's most

parastatals have been mainly depending on external sponsorships for training their executives. However due to economic and budgetary constraints the sponsored trainings were inadequate. Also, the Tanzanian government initiated programs which did not address themselves concretely to a specific training need of public enterprises (United Republic of Tanzania (URT), 2004). This goes against required practice which contends that employers should change their attitude in favour of training their employees otherwise they will continue to give the training function minimal consideration (URT, 2003). This indicates that there is no comprehensive policy to guide and design appropriate training programme. Consequently there has been uncoordinated, fragmented and ad-hoc approach to training and utilization of human and financial resources resulting into poor service delivery to the public. In addition to that there was weak team-working among managers, which has largely caused lack of understanding of the requirement and the pressures to maintain momentum in their own activities (Braathen, et al., 2005). All these problems created a need to review how effective the training and development (T&D) function is carried out. This paper therefore investigates the effectiveness of Training and Development function at management level. Specifically it examined (i) the design of the training and development program, (ii) how it is implemented by comparing an ideal training program and the real one in PO-PSM, and (iii) to seek views as well as evaluate the attitude of trainees in the way the function is carried out.

### **EMPLOYEES TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Training can be defined as a learning process in which people acquire knowledge (K), skills(S), experience (E), and attitudes (A) that they need in order to perform their jobs well for the achievement of organisational goals (Mathis and Jackson, 1998). A survey of the literature shows that T&D are variously defined in a narrow as well as in a broad sense. For example Jackson and Schuler (2000) refers to training as the act of improving competencies needed today or in the future while development refers to improving competencies over the long term. Matthews, et.al., (2004) argues that training is concerned with providing an individual with the opportunity to learn what he/she needs in order to do their job more effectively. Also management training is considered to be a process of enhancing an employee's capacity to handle greater responsibilities successfully (Singh and Vinnicombe, 2003).

In order to conceptualise the scope of training, Gupta (2007) considers the following as characteristics of an ideal training and development function. First, it should be designed with clear scope and objectives. In this case the training needs assessment (TNA) exercise should be conducted to establish skill gap and performance standards. Second, it should have proper reinforcements to continuously improve the performance capability of an individual employee; this is supported by Skinner's behavioural modification model which stipulates that 'when behaviour is repeatedly rewarded, it becomes permanent part of one's personality. Third, it should be role-specific and involve practice; it helps employees do their present jobs better and skills that are practiced often are better learned and less easily forgotten. Fourth, an effective T&D function should be carefully planned in terms of reading materials, learning duration, and instructors. Their proper organization enhances training effectiveness. Fifth, it should be transparent to all employees at all levels. Employees should be aware of selection criteria of trainees and trainers, preparation of relevant teaching materials, training room and accommodation of courses and actual conduction of courses. They feel responsive to training programmes when they are well informed. Lastly, it should be evaluated. Training consumes both organisation's time and money, therefore it is important to determine how well it was conducted (i.e. trainees feedback). Evaluation reports establish whether the organisation has derived more-or-less the same value from the amount of money and time invested in the programme.

The conceptualisation by Gupta (2007) highlights the scope of an effective training programme. Through careful follow up of provided steps, an organisation will provide required training to required employees. This will enhance the ability of employees to execute their daily activities in working place. Likewise public service management department can only perform well if its training programmes have clear scope and objectives; improve capability of an individual employee; and be role-specific and involve practice.

The public service management department should also develop a programme that involves careful planning in terms of training materials, learning duration, and instructors without forgetting proper mechanism of evaluation. As a point of departure the following section examine training and development function in public service management in order to see how it fits in this framework.

### **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNCTION IN PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT**

The Office of Public Service Management (OPSM) is responsible for coordinating all public service employees training in the Tanzanian government and it is fully consulted in initiating new training schemes, or to make substantial changes in existing training programmes. The training and development function in the Public Service Office involves orientation exercise or induction courses for all new entrants and then skill development programme that takes place each year or at least once in every two years for each staff. The programme is drawn specifically for each different cadre and for each different level of grade in accordance with the training needs assessment which is undertaken for every cadre. This enhanced the achievement of the organization objectives, officer's career progression, individual's performance appraisal and gender balance. There is also leadership training to prepare individuals for top level positions in the public service (Rugumyamheto, 2002). Training policy of Tanzania states that Tanzania should be self sufficient in trained and skilled manpower required to man its economy (URT, 1998). In this case training should take place locally; however where local institutions have inadequate training facilities or where local facilities are non-existent, efforts will be made to secure and utilize training opportunities and scholarships that may be made available by friendly countries and International Organisations (Wangwe and Arkadie, 2000).

Furthermore, the policy stipulates that all scholarships for training abroad will only be open to citizens. The nation's programme for higher and middle level training facilities will be expanded and given due emphasis in producing qualified people to man the sectors of the economy which are directly productive. Institutions which are engaged in the training and development of personnel should match their training programmes to Tanzania's needs for manpower. Every senior officer serving in a supervisory capacity has a duty to assist in training and developing junior officers. Every officer should endeavour to train on the job while performing his/her duties (Wangwe and Arkadie, 2000). Despite the efforts made in training public service employees, performance within public sector is considered to be unsatisfactory. Level of bureaucracy within government departments is considered to be high due to high level of complaints from public servants. These weaknesses motivated the researchers to carry out a study with an intention to examine the procedures and effectiveness of training programmes within the public service management office (Abdi, 2005).

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted as a case within PO-PSM. It involves survey in the form of questionnaire and in-depth interviews. In administering questionnaires, sample was drawn from the developed sampling frame by using a Stratified sampling technique. The organization had twelve divisions and units which were used as strata; however three strata were excluded due to unavailability of respondents at the time of data collection. Respondents were selected purposively in order to get at least three middle level managers each stratum (i.e. Staff who are below Directors in the organization chart like assistant directors and other senior officers). They were interviewed through face to face by using a questionnaire. Selection of equal number of respondents from each division made the sample more representative. A total of 46 respondents filled the questionnaire (out of 60 which were distributed). The in-depth interviews were also conducted to 7 respondents. Additionally, review of different documents within OPSM was done in order to supplement data collected from primary sources. Both qualitative and quantitative data collected and analysed. The next section presents the findings of the study. The profile of respondents shows that 72 percent of employees had an average of 10 years work experience. 54 percent of respondents were males while 46 percent were females. The fact that 87 percent of respondents had attended at least three or more

workshops seminars or short courses in addition to their formal education, increases confidence in the validity of their responses concerning the training function.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### The Training Program Design

The findings show that training for employees in public service management office is grouped into seven levels. These levels include induction, basic, specialized, extended, special groups, leadership, development program and counterpart training. The grouping is designed in order to cut across levels of staff in the office. The researchers compiled the training methods and their duration applied with their respect training levels and found out that the common method of training used is *formal courses* (theoretical readings in class where the trainees are sent in a certified training/academic institution). Also the duration of training ranged from half day to 3 years depending on training coverage. Table 1 summarizes the methods used for each training level.

**Table 1: Levels and Methods of Training with their Respective Duration**

Levels of Training	Description	Training Methods	Duration*
<b>Induction training</b>	Training for newly employed staff, to familiarize them with the strategic goals and functions of their organization and their responsibilities.	<i>On the job</i> Job instruction	1 week
<b>Basic training</b>	It takes place within an officers' first year on the job to enhance their skills in performing their duties effectively.	<i>On the job</i> Apprenticeship, Internships, Job rotation, Supervisory assistance and mentoring	1 month
<b>Specialized training</b>	It is a specialized training which reflects the Training Needs Assessment (TNA) on a specified number of employees.	<i>Off-the-job</i> Formal courses	1 day – 1year
<b>Extended training</b>	Training given to enable officers to handle extra tasks or higher level jobs. It is more emphasized on an experienced employee	<i>Off-the-job</i> Formal courses Role playing Simulation Study tours	Up to 3 years
<b>Training for special groups</b>	Training organized for women and disabled. This is to emphasize equal opportunity for all employees.	<i>On the job</i> Job instruction Supervisory assistance <i>Off-the-job</i> ; Formal courses	1 – 5 days
<b>Leadership and development program</b>	Training for experienced staff, aimed at enhancing the officer's employability over the long term. It takes place from the 8 <sup>th</sup> year of service	<i>Off-the-job</i> Formal courses Field trips	Ongoing, Half day – 7 days
<b>Counterpart training</b>	It is provided by foreign experts to their local counterparts. This is done to sustain the services provided by these experts upon expiry of their contracts.	<i>On the job</i> Apprenticeship Job instruction	Ongoing, Half day – 7 days

\*Also depends on employee's familiarity with the new job and tasks.

Table 1 gives an actual picture of the methods of training applied in the organisation with their respective duration, however this indicates shortfalls in the objective of conducting the exercise because 65.2 percent

commented that the design of their organisation's training is not well done and it doesn't reflect the TNA results and the contribution of training to the individual's career progression.

Furthermore, the issue of prejudice in the selection process were discovered because 56 percent say that guidelines for choosing the trainees are not followed while they should base on TNA, contribution to the achievement of the organization objectives, the contribution of training to the employee's career progression, individual's performance appraisal and gender balance. Table 2 shows the summary of the comparison of an ideal training which fulfils all principles of training and real training in PO-PSM

**Table 2: Comparison of an Ideal and Real Training program in the Organisation**

<b>Characteristics of an Ideal Training</b>	<b>Real Training in PO-PSM and other concerned issues</b>
<b>Clarity in scope and objectives</b>	There is clear scope and objective, but 35 percent do not agree that the objectives are achieved. There are still some more efforts to be put by the organisation in fulfilling its objectives. Furthermore the researchers noted that the scope is difficult to achieve because there was no reference on TNA reports in determining training needs and selection of trainees, e.g. <i>basic trainings</i> were conducted upon availability of funds (especially from donors).
<b>Continuous reinforcement of measures to improve employees' skills</b>	Due to inadequate availability of trainings (e.g. counterpart and leadership training programs), there was no much effort put to reinforce the implementation of the program. Employees were the ones who forcefully inquire about the training program opportunity i.e. if the employees do not request for training he/she might never attend
<b>Role-specificity and practice involvement</b>	Even though the training policy emphasizes role specific training programs, 26 percent of employees felt that their training was less useful to their job, hence couldn't practice what they learnt. For example, over 83 percent need urgent training on <i>Leadership Skills</i> , 61 percent need <i>Management Development</i> courses (which encompass skills in planning, organizing, leading, and controlling) and 56 percent need training on <i>Data Management</i> .
<b>Well planned materials, learning duration, and instructors</b>	Respondents reported several weaknesses in the plan claiming that they should be involved in its planning stage. In this case only 52 percent agreed that it is a well planned function.
<b>Transparent</b>	The training policy was not published for the employees to see until year 2004, where from then it was still questionable on how the function is carried out. Sixty-five percent claimed they are not aware of the existence of the training policy, while 56 percent claimed they do not know how the trainees are selected. This had nothing to do with the number of years the employees have stayed in the organization.
<b>Involves regular evaluation and feedback</b>	The training evaluation takes place every 3 years and only 4.3 percent say that it is evaluated and 52.2 percent say it is not others were undecided. Most employees lacked feedback after attending training; they need to know how much their training efforts have contributed to the overall goals of the organization. It makes them feel that they are part of the organization's performance

### Attitude of Training Participants towards T&D Function

Generally, respondents had negative views concerning the way the T&D function was carried out. Table 3 shows a list of seventeen attributes and their respective responses which established general attitude of employees.

**Table 3: Responses towards Attributes of Training.**

Attributes	Agree (%)	Indifferent (%)	Disagree (%)
a. Training helps to acquire technical knowledge and skills	96	0	4
b. It is given adequate importance by the organization	87	0	13
c. Individual skills/abilities are applied on the job	69	17	14
d. It provides opportunity for newcomers to learn about the organization	65	26	9
e. New employees find the training provided useful	65	5	30
f. It is given adequate importance to develop skills and competence	65	9	26
g. There is adequate emphasis on developing managerial capabilities	56	13	31
h. It is given adequate importance by top management	56	13	31
i. It is well planned	52	35	13
j. Organisation utilize benefits acquired from training programs	48	22	30
k. Employees are sponsored for training programs on the basis of stated criteria	44	17	39
l. Employees participate in determining the kind of training they need	39	22	39
m. It is transparent	35	48	17
n. Adequate funds are allocated its implementation	35	30	35
o. There is a well designed and widely shared training policy	35	30	35
p. Feedback is given concerning training's contribution to the organizational objectives	13	10	77
q. It is frequently evaluated and improved	4	44	52

Table 3 shows that attributes 'a' to 'i' are the ones that most employees agreed with (with more than 50 percent score), but attributes 'j' to 'q' are the ones which most employees disagreed with. Ninety-six (96) percent of respondents agree that training help them to acquire technical knowledge and skills. This means after attending training, their performance capability increases. However, looking at the responses given in Table 3 some of the responses (for example item *m* and *q*) go against the characteristics of an ideal training program given in Table 2. Generally most problems appear in training implementation, logistics and feedback, but specific problems found were; inadequate training budget (57%), guidelines for trainee selection are not followed (56%) poor methods of training (35%), training institutes are poorly financed and managed (30%), competent trainers are rare (17%), training is treated as an unnecessary event (17%).

### CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

There is a need to review the way the training function is implemented and put in place effective strategies that work. They should ensure that all guidelines are effectively followed and trainings that are urgently needed are provided. In addition to that, there is still a need to change the methods of training that are not effective and provide more methods of practical nature. Since there has neither been a comprehensive policy to guide an appropriate implementation of training programme nor adequate efforts to make them aware of its function then the HR department should strive to design an effective policy and involve all respective employees in its implementation. This will help to reduce the growing negative

attitude towards the function. It is important for the organization to ensure that employees are adequately trained as planned and that there is a reasonable return on investment that is put on training. However it has been revealed that the evaluation exercise is not frequently done (at least every year). The question is; how does the organization realize the contribution and/or returns of training on its overall performance? How does it compare costs and benefits brought up from training?

From the comparison between the *real* and *ideal* T&D program, it shows that minimal effort has been put to bring the program to standard. For the function to reach required standard then it must have all qualities mentioned in an ideal training function (Table 2). To enhance effective improvement of the training programmes, it's important to;

- Develop a more uniform TNA exercise that aims to improve the level of efficiency of training function and eventually have clarity in scope and objectives.
- Conduct evaluation after every training session and give feedback to the trainees.
- Prioritise the issue of increasing employee capacity, by allocating adequate training budget.
- Implement training function openly and involve every individual in determining the kind of training they need.
- Follow the criteria of sponsoring employees to training programs.

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