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Public Administration International

Newsletter



Progress on the Africa Capacity Building Initiative Leadership Scheme

George Bardwell, Project Director

Early September marked a significant milestone for the Africa Capacity Building Initiative Leadership Scheme as it saw the arrival in the UK of a group of participants for a one-week programme of visits and leadership sessions. The Scheme, which is funded by the UK Department for International Development, has been designed and implemented by a consortium comprising PAI, in the lead, Warwick Business School and the British Council. At the heart of the Scheme is a series of partnerships between senior civil servants in the UK and their opposite numbers in Africa. Visits had already been made to Liberia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone by UK participants; now it was the turn of African partners to spend a week with their counterparts in the UK.

The partnerships involved were between Dame Gillian Morgan, Permanent Secretary for the Welsh Government, and Dr Bernice Dahn, Deputy Minister for Health and Chief Medical Officer for the Government of Liberia; Dave Hartnett, Permanent Secretary in Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, and Ben Kagamara, Commissioner General of the Rwanda Revenue Authority; Helen Edwards, DG in the UK Ministry of Justice, and Sam Mulindwa, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Service and Labour, Government of Rwanda; and Jon Coles, DG in the UK Department for Education,



The DFID Permanent Secretary, Mark Lowcock (front centre), with members of the Scheme, DFID and the Consortium.

and Emmanuel Muvunyi, Deputy Director General in the Rwanda Education Board. In addition Lillian Rugambwa, Director of Training for the Rwanda Revenue Authority participated in the programme.

The week started, and ended, with a two-day leadership seminar led by Emeritus Professor John Benington of the International Centre for Governance and Public Management at Warwick Business School. As well as giving all participants an opportunity to focus on and discuss their own leadership challenges, the seminar addressed the extent to which leadership contributes to the creation of public value in organisations, citizens and communities. On the first evening of the visit the UK Department for International Development hosted an informal reception at which participants

were able to meet Mark Lowcock, the DFID Permanent Secretary, and Donal Brown, the DFID Director for East and Central Africa.

Three days were then spent in the respective UK Ministries or Departments, and involved a series of visits to health and social service facilities in Wales, to schools and other institutions, to tax offices, to the National School of Government, and to the Cabinet Office. The partners also attended senior management meetings with their counterparts. All in all this was an intensive week which gave African participants a valuable opportunity to see at first hand some alternative approaches to public administration, and which allowed all partners to strengthen their joint approach to leadership development.

Guiding principles behind the Africa Capacity Building Initiative Leadership Scheme

John Benington, Emeritus Professor, Warwick Business School

It is worth unravelling some of the assumptions and working principles behind the design of the African Capacity Building Initiative Leadership Scheme. We summarise these as “shoulder to shoulder working and reciprocal learning and knowledge exchange”. What does this mean in practice?

- This is a “peer to peer” leadership mentoring scheme, rather than a programme of training of one person by an expert from another country. The aim is to promote reciprocal learning and mutual exchange of experience between civil servants in different countries. The first question for both partners in the exchange is therefore “What can I learn from my partner and from this interchange – at both individual and organisational levels?”
- This requires all participants to try to keep an open, questioning mind, exercising curiosity and imagination, and trying to put themselves in their counterpart’s shoes. What would it be like to try to lead and manage government and public services in his or her situation? What are the main differences from my own situation? What are the main similarities? How can we share and compare our experience of public leadership with each other?
- This also requires skills in “active listening” and the asking of exploratory questions. The aim is not to offer instant advice or solutions but to clarify and sharpen mutual understanding of the context and the culture, and the leadership challenges and constellation of problems being faced. The aim is therefore careful joint diagnosis of complex problem situations, not prescription; a textured analysis and understanding, not a cosmetic face-lift; the building of a relationship of mutual trust and shared understanding, not the offering of quick fix solutions.
- Up to two thirds of the peer mentoring time may be given over to understanding the context, the culture and the organisational situation, before any attempt is made to discuss ways of tackling the problem. Even at this stage it is probably not useful to offer “advice” or solutions. The peer mentoring process is less likely to include phrases like “my suggestion is....”, than comments like “I faced a slightly similar leadership challenge in the very different context of the UK, and I found it helpful to approach it in this way” or “... I learned from making the following mistakes”.
- Only after this careful groundwork does it make sense to begin to discuss possible strategies to tackle the specific leadership challenges facing each participant. Evidence and experience suggests that the time invested in this kind of preparation is amply repaid in terms of the wisdom of the judgements reached.

Study programme

“Successful cities: promoting economic growth and sustainable development”



Our new one-week “Successful cities: promoting economic growth and sustainable development” study programme aims to explore the background to urban growth in the UK, which is now one of the most urbanized

countries in the world, and to look at how the future is taking shape. Despite the wealth of the UK, the fact is that poverty is concentrated in urban areas, in common with many other countries.

Throughout the programme, the focus will be on making the UK

experience relevant to participants. This will mean examining issues and encouraging discussion and debate to explore how UK approaches can be changed and adapted so that they are relevant to other countries. At the end of the programme participants will be able to see how cities across the world can achieve their common goals by sharing their common experience.

The programme is designed primarily for senior leaders in ministries, agencies, local government (mayors, chief executives, city managers, etc.) and other public bodies working on economic growth and city development; those responsible for civil service development and promoting better working across ministries, particularly in the areas of health, housing, education, employment, transport and justice; and senior representatives from outside government who have an interest in economic growth and the factors that can shape economic wellbeing, including spatial land use, labour skills and universities.

The study programme takes place from 23 to 27 April 2012. You can apply on-line at www.public-admin.co.uk or by contacting Clare Walters at Clare.Walters@public-admin.co.uk; or by phone on +44 20 7580 3590; or by fax on +44 20 7580 4746.

Qatar study programme

Neil McCallum, Programme Director



“Searching for evidence” (left to right) Jassim Saeed A S Na Al-Mansoori, Yousuf Jamaan B Al-Hamad, Khalid Sahjeea Al-Marri, Hamad Saqr M S Al-Muftah and Nasser Ali M A Na Alemadi

In September, PAI was delighted to welcome a fourth group of prosecutors from the Attorney General’s Office in



“It wasn’t me!” (left to right) Mohd Abdulla Al-Mohannadi, Ghanem Saif A Al-Sulaiti and in the background Maryam Abdulla M F Al-Jabir.

Qatar. Earlier groups have explored approaches used in England and Wales to achieving access to justice and safeguarding human rights (See Newsletter edition No 10). However on this occasion the focus was on the particular challenges in investigating and prosecuting fraud, money laundering and corruption. Whilst these are not serious problems in Qatar

(indeed the most recent Corruption Perception Index prepared by Transparency International, which contributed to this programme, suggests that levels of corruption are perceived internationally to be lower in Qatar than in the UK), financial crimes are among the most complex to prosecute successfully and this programme was designed to address a problem that is increasingly global.

Highlights of the programme included discussions with one of the UK’s leading prosecutors of financial crimes, a meeting in Parliament with Lord Woolf (ex-Chief Justice of England and Wales and President of the International Commercial Court in Qatar) and a practical exercise in searching for and seizing electronic evidence at which the prosecutors excelled, gaining high praise for their thoroughness and professionalism from the fraud investigators leading the exercise.

Study programme for the Taiwan Environmental Protection Agency

Dr Neil Jackson, Programme Director

There’s always something new from PAI. In November 2010, a request arrived from the Taiwan Environmental Protection Agency (TEPA) for a one-week study programme in London on the UK approach to strategic environmental policy formulation, administration and consultation.

We had not done anything in that field before. But with active co-operation from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), contributions from Dr Martin Griffiths (formerly of the Environment Agency) and his former colleagues at Thames Water when the Thames Tunnel project was conceived, and my Office of Water Services background, we built an innovative

programme. The Director of TEPA, Madame Wang, led her delegation of eighteen to PAI in April 2011. Their interpreter, Tommy, was the best I have ever worked with. We used the proposed Tunnel as a running case-study throughout – from sitting delegates down with DEFRA policy-makers on EU and other factors in Ministers’ decisions through to the role of the Environment Agency as advisor on, and implementer of, those decisions, to Thames Water’s current major consultation process on the Tunnel.

We included an excellent visit to the London Wetlands Centre at Barnes, South West London. That was itself a fine example of British conservation

opportunity (turning disused reservoirs into an urban wildfowl refuge and environmental education centre). A short walk afterwards towards Putney allowed us to see the Tunnel project. We examined the proposed main excavation site at Barn Elms and cause of the most vocal opposition to the Tunnel. Then on to a footbridge which gives an excellent (and very offensive!) view of one of the Combined Sewage Outfalls, which explain why the EU is taking the UK government to court for polluting the river Thames.

Our speakers took us into the reality of environmental policy UK-style. And in return, we received really satisfying remarks and appraisal scores.

Afghanistan – looking back

*Donald McGregor,
PAI Director*

31 July 2011 marked the end of almost three years' work in Kabul for PAI's consulting team. As with all major projects, the contract end-date was a bitter-sweet moment. PAI, supported by Adam Smith International, was contracted by the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) in June 2009 to support the implementation of the Government's new pay and grading policy – a substantial task involving all central government ministries and agencies.

Our project was one of three components of the Civil Service Reform Programme implemented by IARCSC and funded by the World Bank. The origins of the project lay in the reform programme established by Presidential Decree in 2004. Pay and grading is "pillar 2" of five "pillars" which, between them, cover the restructuring of government; the rationalisation of core functions and responsibilities; and the reform of the civil service.

Afghanistan faces so many challenges – social, economic, political and of course security, all of which affect the operation of projects like ours. However, the abiding memories are of



Senior management from the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission. Left – right: Abdel-Ellah Sediqi, Director, Policy and Legislation; Rahela Sidiqi, Senior Adviser to the Chairman; Jeanne Berry, Programme Director; Masoud Tokhi, Director, Public Administrative Reform; Mir Javid, Director General, Civil Service Management Department

friendships formed with Afghan colleagues whose determination to press on in the most difficult of circumstances is quite remarkable.

Looking back, much has been achieved. The project's Results Framework confirms its success in all the specified areas and shows that it has significantly exceeded its benchmarks in many of them. There is more to do but organisation structures now correspond with strategic plans; consistent and meaningful job descriptions are established; and the new pay and grading system is operational in all ministries and agencies. Earlier this year, in a letter to President Karzai, General David Petraeus, ISAF Commander, commended the IARCSC for its work in strengthening capacity in the civil service and, particularly, for progress made in pay and grading reform.

One of the project's concluding activities was the study visit to London in July by senior staff in the IARCSC, led by Mir Javed Sadat, Director General, Civil Service Management Department. The programme was designed to familiarise the group with salary systems in the UK and elsewhere. One highlight was a meeting with the HR Manager of The Tower of London to discuss the latest approaches to pay and grading in Historic Royal Palaces, the independent charity that looks after the Tower and other famous London buildings

Our special thanks are due to international consultants Chris Jones, Graeme Jackson, Manny Morga, Ken Donaldson, Mal Bell, Peter Baran and Denis Dunn and to our national project staff, Ghafar Karamkhil, Hashmat Samoor and Sayed Mubasher for making the project such a success.

Staff changes

Alexis Turrall left us in October after almost six years as International Projects Manager. His new position is Principal Consultant with HTSPE, a UK-based consultancy firm located closer to his home and family in Hertfordshire. Alexis has been involved in most aspects of PAI's work, but most notably for managing our Pay and Grading project in Afghanistan over the past three years.

Kathy Tedd also left in September to join DFID as a Governance Advisor in the Fragile States Team based in East Kilbride, Scotland. During her time with PAI, Kathy supported EC framework contracts and managed the African Capacity Building Initiative Leadership Scheme as well as making fact-finding visits to Rwanda and Zimbabwe.

Narine Bastin has been promoted to International Projects Manager and will be managing consultancy projects in Rwanda and Southern Sudan, as well as

working on EC framework contracts. **Eduard Zakharchenko** joined us in July as an intern providing support to our on-going framework contracts and consultancy projects. Originally from Ukraine, Eduard's background is in the civil service in Ukraine and his work experience includes regional development within government. He is now International Projects Manager in PAI.

Good luck, Alexis and Kathy. Keep in touch. Congratulations, Narine, and welcome to Eduard.