

## THE PUBLIC POLICY HUB

# Building Capacity of Government Leaders in Egypt

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## **Abstract**

Public sector institutions and their officials have always played a substantial role in ensuring sustainable development and economic growth. In this sense, ensuring a functioning civil service has received increasing attention worldwide in recent decades, resulting in a number of public sector reform attempts, documented failures and successes, and shared lessons learned.

The Egyptian civil service sector is widely characterized as inefficient and corrupt, to say the least. Favoritism, low salary, and the lack of a comprehensive capacity building process of civil servants and of a merit based performance and promotion system have left the civil service sector incompetent and dysfunctional.

This paper examines the realities of the civil service sector in Egypt and identifies a number of recommendations and ways forward, especially in relation to training, capacity building and building an effective and efficient senior and middle level management layer in the Egyptian public service. The paper mainly builds on secondary resources and uses experiences from other countries to define some key best practices and lessons learned. The paper calls for a reform focused on mid and senior management levels through concrete steps to revolutionize the preparation, training and retaining of mid and senior management in the civil service sector.

## **Introduction**

Unequivocally, public administration plays an important role in delivering goods and services in any society. This classical function of the state is primarily managed by the public officials. Therefore, the capacity building efforts of public officials is directly related to the cost-effective and cost-efficient delivery of goods and services to citizens. In this context, training is considered a key component of developing capacity of public officials of any country, either developed or developing. The situation of Egypt is in this way different.

When we talk about the crucial role public bureaucracy plays in any country, we focus on the implementation and execution part of public policies, the training component we are focusing our discussion on in this part is meant to enhance the capacities and build the capabilities of public servants for better execution and implementation of public policies. The fundamental purpose of training is “the effective transferal of relevant knowledge and skills to the work place, which may vary according to the enabling organizational characteristics” (Wafa, 2015, p.116) and, thereby, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector which will certainly be reflected in the improved delivery of public service leading to citizens’ satisfaction.

This paper highlights the importance of training and capacity building for public service employees by providing case studies from successful examples from countries such as Singapore, France, and India; and draws conclusions from such practices to guide us in our attempt to build a framework for capacity building programs for Egyptian Civil Service employees.

The paper is divided into four key sections beginning with a background history of the Egyptian Civil Service including a brief summary of the legal framework and recent advancements, followed by the current practices for selection of senior management, then an overview of the best practices from international experiences in the selection and promotion of mid-level and senior public officials and the final section succinctly concludes the paper with recommendations for reforming the Egyptian Civil Service System.

## **The Egyptian Civil Service- History and Current Practice**

The roots of the Egyptian Civil Service date back to the fourth Millennium B.C., particularly during the era of the Old Empire, from 2900 to 2475 B.C.

(Beyer, 1959). Beyer emphasizes on the Old Empire with the understanding “this not only is the earliest period for which we have any considerable amount of information, but also one of the most splendid in Egyptian history” (Beyer, 1959:243).

In modern Egypt, the development of the civil service is linked to the people’s revolution of 1952 and the different political regimes, which can be categorized as follows: (1) Gamal Nasser Regime (1956-70), (2) Anwar Sadat Regime (1970-81), (3) Mubarak Regime (1981-2011), (4) SCAF Period (2011-2012) Mursi Regime (2012-13) and (4) Sisi Regime (2013 until present)

### **(i) Gamal Nasser Regime (1956-70)**

As a result of the 1952 Revolution, many expatriates left the country and the need to replace them with educated Egyptians became a reality, leading to an increase in the government-employed workforce. In 1952, the total number of civil servants in the Egyptian government reached to 25,000 (Sayed, 2004). However, the “graduate policy” initiated by the government in 1961 to recruit all graduates of higher education into the public sector essentially contributed to the enormous increase in the number of the civil servants.

### **(ii) Anwar Sadat Regime (1970-81)**

Since 1961 and onwards, the hiring of university graduates in civil service did not consider any qualifications. Promotion was based on seniority rather than merit and performance. Low pay scales have impacted the societal status of civil servants, and has influenced the level of effectiveness and efficiency and the quality of the services provided through public servants across different state institutions.

### **(iii) Mubarak Regime (1981-2011)**

Yet, the suspension of the “graduate policy” in 1984 did not restrict the increase in the number of employed civil servants. In 2001, the total number of public servants reached 5.5 million (Sayed, 2004) and between 2015-2016, the number reached 5.8 million (CAPMAS, 2016). However, this number did decrease by 80,0000 in the last quarter of 2017, leaving the number of public servants at 5 million (CAPMAS, 2017)<sup>(1)</sup>. This was a result of a new government policy that halted all new employment in the public sector. The ultimate aim of this policy is to downsize the bureaucracy, increase its efficiency, and decrease its burden on the national budget. Yet, the prospect of enhancing the technical capacity of the existing public civil servants remained a challenge.

In 1991, Law No. 5 was issued to regulate the selection of the higher senior positions in the public service, which included the first undersecretary, the undersecretary, and the general managers. It sets a number of requirements.

For example, Article 4 of its Executive defines the application process for senior management positions. Applicants must provide his or her curriculum vitae (CV), along with a personal statement detailing success and achievements as well as a motivational letter discussing their proposed plan to improve performance and staff morale. Article 11 instructs the selection committee to send eligible applicants to participate in the leadership position training, organized by the Central Agency for Organization and Administration (CAOA), as indicated in Article 13. According to Article 12, eligible candidates are then selected for the different managerial and leadership positions based on their scores in the trainings designed by the CAO.

In 2008, the National Management Institute was founded by the Egyptian Ministry of State for Administrative Development to enhance the capacity of public sector officials. According to Wafa (2015), the establishment of the Institute was necessary, among other things, to overcome the challenges the Egyptian civil service is currently facing, such as an overstuffed bureaucracy, the declining quality of the available pool of workers and the regulations that hinder the development of the Egyptian bureaucracy. Regarding training public sector officials, the flagging Egyptian economy has resulted in a decline in investment in training and development programs, which is an impediment to building capacity for public officials. In addition, the uncertain nature of the Egyptian national leadership and the low institutional priority given to capacity building initiatives are also considered responsible for alleged poor performance of the Egyptian bureaucracy. To improve the situation, Wafa (2015) suggests that the Egyptian civil service align its capacity-building initiatives (for example, continuous in-service training) with the relevant strategic development policies of the government.

In the Egyptian administrative system, the senior management positions may only be achieved based on the numbers of years of service and being favored by the higher layers of the administrative management. Power distance is an integral part of the organizational culture of the public administration system in Egypt and is enforced by how the system is institutionalized and effectuated.

The current human resources management (HRM) practices in the Egyptian Civil Service calls for immediate interventions to regain the public trust in the system, improve its effectiveness and efficiency, combat widespread corruption, promote transparency across different levels, and create an ethical civil service.

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1 [http://www.masrawy.com/news/news\\_economy/details/2017/10/15/1172398/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AD%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B9-%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-800-%D8%A3%D9%84%D9%81-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B8%D9%81-%D8%AE%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B6%D9%8A](http://www.masrawy.com/news/news_economy/details/2017/10/15/1172398/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AD%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A1%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B9-%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-800-%D8%A3%D9%84%D9%81-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B8%D9%81-%D8%AE%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B6%D9%8A)



#### **(iv) SCAF Period (2011-12) and Mursi Regime (2012-13)**

Following the January 2011 uprising, civil servants conducted a number of demonstrations and protests calling for increase on salaries and expansion of the provision of permanent contracts to include the civil servants with temporary contracts. The Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF), followed by President Mursi, adopted the same strategy: they agreed to the calls to calm the protesters regardless of the financial and administrative impact of these decisions.

#### **(v) Sisi Regime (since 2013)**

In 2015, the Government of Egypt issued a new Civil Service Law No 19/2015 that was later amended into No 81/2016 due to serious attacks from different stakeholders including the parliament and the civil servants. This law and its main features will be discussed below.

#### **The Current Legal Framework: Civil Service Law 81/2016**

The new Civil Service Law No. 81/2016, previously known as Law No. 18/2015, was issued in 2016 and its bylaws in 2017 by the Prime Minister Decree #1216. It is important to note that the requirements indicated in this new civil law concerns the recruitment and selection of senior and mid-level management, as defined in Articles from 51 to 56, building on specifications already regulated in Law 5/1991. The 2016 Law sets forth a comprehensive, ambitious framework for the reform of the bureaucracy: It introduces a human resource development approach in government agencies; transparent announcement of vacant positions, standardized testing to fill them; it increases the proportion of base pay to variable pay and organizes a system of voluntary early retirement; it also creates the new post of permanent undersecretary in all ministries and puts term limits on leadership positions; it offers a longer maternity leave; and it establishes a new system for assessing employee performance thus allowing career advancement for those who excel (Bahaa-Eldin, 2015).

Trainings is also an important component in the new civil law, which proposes to develop the capacities of existing and upcoming government employees.

Said (2016) described the role of the training as to prepare the seniors officials and employees starting their managerial level positions for becoming a professional leader, plan work schedules and strategies towards improving the functions of the respective units. These strategies also include ways to improve the functions of employees that will be supervised and overall, all the skills and expertise that can help them perform and excel in their new leadership position. (Said, 2016).

The new law also emphasizes the importance of training the newly hired employees once they join the civil service. Additionally, monthly and annual trainings to be conducted with current employees in order to update them on new technology and the skills necessary to improve their performance. A new article which was not in the old Civil Service Law (no. 47/ 1979), stipulates the provision of

complementary on the job training sessions in the work field by different government institutions to new graduates, to enhance practical working experience that would increase their chances for finding jobs (Said, 2016).

In addition to the selection criteria and requirements indicated in the 1991 Law, Law 81/2016 introduced new criteria and updated existing criteria and requirements. For example, Article 55 of the bylaws requires applicants to submit a plan with SMART<sup>(2)</sup> objectives on how to improve the quality of services provided and advance the work in the administrative unit. Article 56 of the bylaw of Law 81/2016 specifies the selection criteria to include, among other things, academic credentials, foreign language proficiency, previous trainings and courses, performance reports, and proposed plans. The CAO continues to be the main agency responsible for the formulation of the selection committees and delegated to follow up on the selection processes, training, and placement as indicated in Article 2 of law 81/2016. It is important to note here that while this Law and its bylaws clearly state the composition, formulation, selection criteria, process, and training procedures for personnel eligible for mid and senior management positions, further operationalization of these procedures and requirements are needed to enable effective and efficient implementation of the selection and promotion system on the ground. This operationalization can build on best practices and lessons learned from other countries that went through a similar public service reform processes.

Said (2016) also provides insight on how the new law is expected to deal with the flaws and impediments to these new policies. The first issue is related to the timing of the training programs offered and how the announcement of the training can be manipulated to favor the particular few who would monopolize the training in order to get the promotion. Yet there are no pre-requisites for attending the training prior to the promotion. Furthermore, although it is an obligatory training to qualify employees for promotion, the training has no focus nor any certain specification (Said, 2016). The second issue is related to the logistical issues pertaining to the training program. When such trainings are provided, facilities are not well prepared to conduct the programs, the venue might be located far away from the office of employees, and no transportation is being provided nor any allowances to cover costs incurred for participating in the training course (Said, 2016). Finally, there are no incentives for attending these training courses and as a consequence, employees start to withdraw from participating (Said, 2016).

Leat and Kot (2007) posit that other hindrances related to recruitment and trainings mechanism for civil service employees in Egypt stems from the socio-cultural context. The authors argue that the Egyptian approach to defining responsibilities in management positions lack precision. They further argue that this lack of precision may be consistent with the higher power distance

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<sup>2</sup> SMART Objectives stand for S: Specific, M: Measurable, A: Achievable, R: Realistic, T: Time-Bound

and with low individualism since employees are likely to do what they are told; partly out of respect (or fear) for authority and also as part of their loyalty to the organization. This leads to the facilitation in the exercise of authority in a personal manner.

The new law was established to overcome these weaknesses and provide a newly enhanced institutionalized framework to overcome these crippling impediments. Article 62 of the Law stipulates that in order for an employee to be promoted to a managerial level, he or she must attend a certain tailored, highly qualified, training for their respective posts and garner at least 70% pass marks (Civil Service Law, 2016). These requirements apparently ensure meritocracy and improve transparency in the process of promotions based on qualifications and merit, rather than nepotism and favoritism. This will further induce a positive working environment wherein employees are encouraged to enthusiastically seek training to enhance their knowledge and capabilities, as the new law has left no place for unskilled or unqualified employees to be promoted to managers (Said, 2016).

The law also aims at improving the transparency of government entities in regards to their training programs by making such programs accessible to all civil service employees. This is done by publishing annual training plans on the CAO website thus eliminating any act of favoritism or attempted bribery and corruption. With this new automated system, employees can easily access the training and conferences schedules on-line and check the availability of training sessions, locate the suitable training and register on-line with ease and spending less time (Civil Service Law, 2016).

## **Methodology**

This paper builds on secondary data. Access to primary data as well as potentials to meet with officials and decision makers to interview them was not possible due to constraints on data collection. The methodology included 1) a thorough review of available resources on public service in Egypt tackling the legal framework, the progress across the different political era and the on-ground established practices and procedures, and 2) identification of best practices and lessons learned in the field of public service reform through a review of experiences from different countries that either shared some common administrative context as in the case of India, had a tangible impact on the development of the Egyptian public service sector and/or its legal framework as in the case of France, or presented a pronounced exemplary model in public service practices and management as in the case of Singapore.

## **Selection of Senior Management: the Current Practice**

In a study by Leat and Kot (2008) evidence that the [informal] publicity through the existing employees are the most frequently used recruitment methods, while word of mouth remains another popular method. In Egypt and other countries in the MENA region, internal and informal mechanisms play a dominant role

for recruiting and selecting new employees in both public and private sectors.

For decades, employment in the public sector has been regarded as a “good catch”. This established belief is usually motivated by the nature and advantages of public sector work such as limited number of working hours, steady income, low competition, and the permanent nature of the contract (Wafa, 2015). Taking into consideration the poor working conditions and the low salaries, any attempt from the Egyptian government to recruit qualified candidates to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the government services is doomed to failure, especially since these candidates ideally seek recruitment in the private sector or abroad. With the current pool of civil servants, the possibility of finding qualified, self-motivated, effective and efficient calibers in senior positions is minimal, if not non-existent.

To better understand the selection process for the senior management and leadership positions in the civil service sector, it is important to distinguish between three categories. The first category contains ministers and deputy ministers, the political appointees made by the President on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. The second category includes the first undersecretary, the undersecretary, and the general managers. The third category involve the other staff (six different ranks) or the hiring grades of public service. Their recruitment is subjected to a seniority-based system as opposed to a merit-based system.

In the seniority based promotion system, the number of years of service and connections with the higher layers of administration play a significant role in determining access to the senior and top management positions. Mid-level management and junior staff are selected based on number of years of service, and scoring a grade of “excellent” in the annual performance appraisal, which is not linked to solid key performance indicators. Exceptional performance, creativity, and commitment are not accounted for in the annual performance appraisal process as majority of the civil servants receive the same grading. There is an absence of a reliable mechanism to identify and differentiate the high performers, self-motivated, productive employees with leadership potentials in this system. In fact, those who are trying to improve the public sector work environment are seen as challenging the status quo and exposing the failure and ineffectiveness of other employees and as such, are mostly threatened and ridiculed rather than encouraged and motivated.

## **Best Practices in Mid-Level and Senior Management Selection and Promotion-Learning from International Experiences**

### **Setting the Scene for merit-based promotion and selection process for Mid and Senior Positions**

The CAOAs intend to understand the mechanisms and methods to enforce reform in the Egyptian civil service by learning from different HRM best practices.

For the learning process, it is important to understand how and to what extent infrastructure and resources play an effective HRM. For example, one first task can be to develop a competency framework for the civil servants detailing the type and level of competencies, skills and behaviors needed at different levels of the civil service sector. Developing this competency framework will enforce adherence to a standardized framework and decrease levels of nepotism and corruption in the recruitment, selection and promotion process.

Second, the availability of technological infrastructure such as an automated HRM system that is centrally managed by the CAOAs can be equally helpful to ensure standardization and parameterization against established nationwide criteria and performance benchmarking and ranking. This can also be linked to central databases that include vacant mid and senior level positions, trainings and career advancement opportunities, application to available funds to finance career advancement and trainings, as well as international and national resources related to HRM best practices in civil service and citizen satisfaction.

### **Creating a Pool of Candidates for Mid and Senior Level Management Position**

In 1995, Singapore introduced one of the most comprehensive public service reform programs entitled “Public Service for the 21st Century Program” or PS21P (Quah, 2010). Among its major successes was a considerable boost to quality training opportunities. The PS21P introduced a new training policy that confirmed the public servants’ right to a minimum of 100 hours of annual trainings, that the supervisor cannot refuse (Quah 2010). However, these training hours were not mandatory, which meant that those who are willing to advance in their careers were the ones who requested the opportunities.

This policy not only highlighted those who are self-motivated and interested in growing their careers, but it also proved cost-efficient as only those interested were trained.

The Counter Allowance Scheme was also introduced. This policy provided allowances to public servants who participate in the training pre-requisites, pass the test, and receive positive assessments from their supervisors and customers (Quah, 2010). Introduction of such policies to the Egyptian administrative system can further provide for a solid basis in the selection and promotion practices of mid and senior level in the public civil service.

An innovation and creativity fund was established as part of the PS21P. The aim of this fund was to reward the public servants who come up with ideas that

can improve the quality of the provided services and increase customer satisfaction (Quah, 2010). Creating similar databases of the public servants who are engaged enough and are able to “think outside the box” can again add to the pool of possible candidates or calibers for future mid and senior management positions. It is important to note here that these policies and initiatives have not necessarily been introduced in the Singaporean example for the purpose of creating a pool of possible candidates for mid and senior level management. Nevertheless, they can be used in a different context to achieve a different purpose. These types of databases can act as the track records for candidates applying for mid and senior level management positions in the Egyptian civil service, instead of relying on paper submissions. Again, this pool of eligible candidates can better help in a talent management system.

The Singaporean Promotion, Ranking, and Appraisal System (PRAISE) as an example of a web-based talent management system can be of interest here. The PRAISE system helped to merge the appraisal, ranking and promotion practices and systems into one system. Using technology to create this unified and standardized system decreased nepotism and ensured effectiveness and efficiency.

### **Training of Civil Servants in Singapore**

In Singapore, public sector officers receive training from a variety of sources. The Civil Service Institute (CSI), established in March 1971, was the main training organization for the Singapore Civil Service, conducting over 900 courses for more than 20,000 participants, annually. This Institute worked towards developing management, supervisory and operating skills (United Nations, 2005). Later on, the Civil Service College (CSC), whose operations began in January 1993, was established to nurture public sector leadership by focusing on training on policy development. Effective beginning on 1 April 1996, the CSI and the CSC were amalgamated to create one central training institution for the Singapore Civil Service. The merged entity is now known as the CSC (United Nations, 2005).

The CSC is comprised of the following three entities: The Institute of Policy Development (IPD), the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM), and the Civil Service Consulting Group (CSCG) (United Nations, 2005).

The Singapore Public Service has established a policy that all employees are entitled to and should undergo at least 100 hours of sponsored training a year – avoiding the tendency of staff or employers to neglect their developmental needs due to exigencies of service. Notably, training budgets are assigned to departments and agencies, and not to the training institutions. This gives government departments the autonomy to select their sources of training and hence be in a position to demand relevant and quality programs from vendors. Training institutions in the government sector are therefore subject to the market discipline of having to compete with private sector providers for the business of government agencies who seek training (Saxena, 2011).



**According to Saxena (2011), the Civil Service College's role in the public service sector included the below:**

1. To develop among civil servants an understanding of the key factors which were the cornerstones of Singapore's continued survival and success. These fundamentals were to be debated and internalized and from time to time, changed to fit changing circumstances, so that civil servants shared the same goals and values;
2. To build a value system, a sense of esprit de corps, camaraderie and a sense of tradition among senior civil servants, so that they would have a shared spirit of service to the nation, competence, dedication and integrity, such that the public should continue to expect this of them;
3. To bring officers up-to-date with the latest ideas, thinking and trends in a world of rapid change;
4. To work together with the private sector to continue to make Singapore successful."

Meritocracy is taken so seriously in Singapore when designing different training programs, the new "Management Associates Programme" is the elite on the job-training, where civil servants who are selected as part of this training rotate across different ministries and departments so they can be immersed in the experience and learn as they go further and later on, they are set to be take on leadership positions in the civil service and 'seconded' out to other government-linked organizations or companies (Guo & Ladner, 2016).

The Singaporean experience suggests that the relevance and responsiveness of training is attributed to the heavy involvement of its public sector leadership in the training process (Low & James, 2016). Its training programs are designed in real world context and are cognizant of the current challenges and strategic issues facing the country and bureaucracy. Permanent secretaries and deputy secretaries are in the best position to design training programs that will prepare young leaders to deal with these issues. Indeed, public sector leaders are by far the best trainers to impart real-life policy lessons from dilemmas and debates they have themselves experienced. Singapore has somehow managed to strike a delicate balance, involving permanent secretaries and chief executives, to keep the Civil Service College training relevant" (Low & James, 2016).

**Recruitment in France**

General trends in recruitment and training for public sector leaders involve the inclusion of competence frameworks (Larat, 2017). These frameworks provide capability development guidance for individuals, government bodies and agencies in the form of descriptions and behaviors for all levels of public administration.

However, there are challenges to training of the public sector and these include identifying and selecting those among the available staff members who will become leaders, choosing a selection criteria and according to which procedures,

and determining at which stages of the professional career of senior civil service should training programs be organized and conducted. With specific reference to the French process of recruitment and selection, France has relied on competitive exams. Civil service employees are recruited at the beginning of their career through competitive exams. This recruitment is followed by training periods in schools of public administration.

Subsequently, France has initiated a leadership development strategy that involves a centralized approach for managing the highest positions in State administration (all persons to be appointed by cabinet decision). This strategy also includes provisions in the field of human resource management in each ministry or governmental body to identify and select potential leaders among existing senior civil servants. To ensure its coordination and consistency, this strategy is under the responsibility of the Government General Secretariat (SGG), a body under the Premier Minister's authority in charge of organizing government operations; and within this body is a dedicated task force in charge of coordinating all actions geared towards the development of current and future public service leaders.

French leadership strategy combines education, training and professional development in an incremental and comprehensive scheme. This scheme includes programs for senior civil servants at different stages of their career.

Preparing future leaders to better perform their duties starts with the pre-service training period at the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA). After this, executive programs focused on management competences are offered during the career of those who are foreseen to access higher positions. While knowledge and skills related to public management are at the core of the training programs offered in the first steps, competences and aptitudes related to leadership become increasingly important in training programs designed for the higher level position holders.

### **Recruitment in India**

Mishra (2006) provides an in-depth presentation on the process for the selection of officers of the Indian Administrative Services. This process is conducted in three parts. The first part involves a preliminary examination to test the numerical ability, awareness of current national and international events, and the state of mind of the candidate to grapple with administrative issues. The second part is the main examination where approximately 10% of the candidates take part from those who are selected through the preliminary examination. It is through this main examination that candidates provide their priority option for selection to the various Indian administrative and central services. About 15% of the candidates appearing in the main examination are declared eligible to appear for the final stage: the personal interview. The personal interview is conducted by various

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3 Al-Masry Al-Youm. (2017). National Academy for Youth to be discussed in World Youth Forum. Retrieved from <http://www.egyptindependent.com/national-academy-youth-discussed-world-youth-forum/>



boards constituted but the Union Public Service Commission, composed of board chairman, subject experts, psychologists and reputed civil servants. In the conclusion of this selection process, half of the 15% from the main examination are declared successful.

### **Lesson Learned from Singapore, India and France**

Egypt can employ the Singaporean PRAISE system as a model for their own web-based talent management system. A web-based system can benefit Egypt in the sense that it will provide a strategic and coherent hiring process, and provide a unified and standardized system of such processes for successive administrations. In addition, such a system will allow for a more effective and accessible means of sharing information and maintaining engagement of both employees and managers.

In regards to the French and Indian experiences, competitive exams are key in the process of recruitment and subsequent training of civil service employees.

In the case of France, employees are recruited at the beginning of their careers through competitive exams and this recruitment is then followed by training periods in schools of public administration. In India, a rigorous selection process is conducted in three parts and involves other actors such as subject experts, psychologists and reputed civil servants. The Egyptian civil service would greatly benefit from a formal, specialized schools for recruitment and training of potential managers. At the moment, the National Management Institute (NMI) is an institution that can serve this function of a formal institute for recruitment and training. As a note, a crucial initiative for future leaders is currently underway.

The Egyptian government is establishing a National Academy for Youth Leadership, set to open in October 2018<sup>(3)</sup>. The Academy will be opened to train, empower and enhance the capacity of Egyptian youth. This institution will be essential in ensuring that the future leaders of Egypt will be provided with the appropriate trainings to advance the development goals of the country<sup>(4)</sup>.

Further enhancement of the recruitment and training processes in the Egyptian case can also involve, as in the case of India, additional external actors, especially psychologists, who will be able to assess the emotional intelligence of potential recruits and how prepared they will be to handle the emotional sides of their work. Especially since they will be working with people and principles such as empathy will be very important in dealing with a public that may feel that the services that they are being provided with are inadequate to meet their daily needs.

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4 Egypt Today Staff . (2017). National Academy for Youth leadership opens in October. Retrieved from <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/20046/National-Academy-for-Youth-leadership-opens-in-October>

## **Reforming the Senior Management and Leadership Building on International Experience-the Way Forward: Preparing, Training and Retaining**

Based on the above, the introduction of the new Civil Service Law 81/2016 should be complemented with a number of procedural plans to ensure the operationalization of the law, it is not necessary to re-invent the wheel as the existing law, Law 81/2016 which specifies procedures and requirements for applications to mid and senior management position, must be enforced. The objective implementation and enforcement of existing laws, rules, and regulations is the key to reform. In addition, domestic agencies such as the National Management Institute (NMI), and the CAO A are well equipped to undertake the task of enforcing existing laws.

This section suggests a reform path to the selection and promotion of senior management and leadership positions in the Egyptian public service sector.

This road map can be divided into three main phases: institutionally preparing the scene for the reform, training potential and existing calibers for senior management and leadership positions, and retaining these calibers in the public sector.

### **A. Preparing- Creating an Enabling Environment**

An initial step to prepare the public service environment to be more responsive to the changes initiated in Law 81/2016 is to develop the goals and objectives of the civil service reform. For example, the PS21P in Singapore states that the overall goals and objectives of the reform are (PS21 Office, 2015):

1. To nurture an attitude of service excellence in meeting the needs of the public with high standards of quality, courtesy, and responsiveness.
2. To foster an environment which induces and welcomes continuous change for greater efficiency and effectiveness by employing modern management tools and techniques while paying attention to the morale and welfare of public officers.

Following this, a Public Servant Competency Framework, as well a senior management competency based framework should be developed. This senior management competency framework will detail the core competencies and skills needed in a caliber for a senior management or a leadership position. A prior exercise to this should be a mapping of the type and level of competencies needed across different governmental entities and institutions and to categorize these competencies into

- 1) Core competencies that are essential to all senior and leadership positions, and
- 2) Specialized competencies that respond to identified special needs of specific government agencies or institutions.

Linked to this is to develop a national database of both the needs for senior

and leadership positions as well as the projected positions over the coming five years to enable an effective and efficient planning. This database should also include the associated competencies, skills, and knowledge under each category as well as potential accredited list of training providers.

Winning the public support to the reform plan is equally essential to the success of the reform. Currently, the overall reform plan is not clear. Media awareness, external and internal communication plans, public hearings and debriefs are every important at this stage. Simultaneously, winning the support of the current public servants is also imperative. Development of key messages on the reform and how it is being orchestrated should also be included in this stage.

## **B. Training and Accreditation**

The development of standardized national training packages should be required and be based on the identified core skills and specialized skills will follow the former. This should also include a mapping of potential training services providers in different governorates. These training providers should be accredited, possibly by the NMI, to ensure quality and standardization of training packages. To ensure quality, common indicators should be established. A use of technology in disseminating these training packages should also be considered to ensure cost effectiveness.

The Change Leaders Initiative (CLI) of the NMI, for example, is a tool to develop civil servants in the administrative structure of the Egyptian government in order to motivate the civil servants to feel a sense of belonging, to protect public property, and to fulfill personal goals through the fulfillment of state goals, and ultimately ensuring the well-being of the Egyptian Society<sup>(5)</sup>. The NMI also provides programs for senior and middle level managers that can be utilized in the leadership development of civil service employees. In fact, the Government Leaders' Academy (GLA) program is recommended for senior and middle managers with the government and private sectors<sup>(6)</sup>.

The Excellence Center of the NMI provides professional information technology services. These services can be best utilized should the Egyptian government use the Singaporean PRAISE system as a model for their own web-based talent management system. As noted earlier, the PRAISE system merges the appraisal, ranking and promotion practices and systems into one. The use of this technology creates a unified and standardized system and helps decrease nepotism, ensuring effectiveness and efficiency of the civil service sector. The CAO also works in the development of a system of inspection to ensure the authenticity and efficiency of the employees' performance. In addition to establishing the principle of the fair treatment of customers and addressing citizen complaints in various areas of the civil service affairs<sup>(7)</sup>.

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5 [http://www.nmi.gov.eg/StaticPage.aspx?SP=Special\\_Initiation.aspx](http://www.nmi.gov.eg/StaticPage.aspx?SP=Special_Initiation.aspx)

6 <http://www.nmi.gov.eg/UserFiles/File/28-11-2010/GLA.pdf>

7 <http://www.caoa.gov.eg/WebForms/ContentPages.aspx?OimBWvdgyVJ2XR7irlQgZKeyOHqMDfLLOQ41IVpdkuQ=>

Linked to training is creating an environment that is conducive of change to ensure effective transfer of learning to the work environment. A revision of governing decrees and practices should also be done.

### **C. Retaining- Incentiving Qualified Calibers**

The third phase should focus on retaining the qualified calibers created using public funds. An important part of this is operationalizing merit based selection and a promotion system of mid and senior positions. A merit system is the practice of selecting and promoting people based on their qualifications, competencies, performance and track records of achievement through a fair and transparent process. A merit based system evolves from the merit principle which entails that any position is only filled based on explicit merit rules that are publicly shared and agreed upon and can be contested in case of breaching. It builds on and utilizes a meritocratic criterion and mainly encompasses two systems: closed career-based system, and a position-based system. In a closed career based system, promotion and selection of mid-and senior-level management is limited to the already existing public servants. On the other hand, in position- based system, the criteria are the selection of the best candidate based on the position's needs and requirements, whether internally or externally. Countries have differed on their preference for a closed career based as in Japan, or a position based as in the USA. Other countries have chosen a mixture of both.

In Egypt, the current operating system based on Law 81/2016 is a closed career-based system. Mobility within the civil service system and promotion are only available to internal candidates. Law 81/2016 specifies procedures and requirements for applications to mid and senior management position. In order to operationalize a merit based system in the selection and promotion of mid and senior positions, the below tools can be used to ensure a fair and transparent selection and promotion system:

#### **First: In the Selection Process**

- Development of “job analysis” of vacant position;
- Written “job descriptions”;
- Associated “person specification”;
- Standard application;
- Clear scoring scheme based on the person specification;
- Solid track records to attest to the candidates’ capabilities, qualities, and achievements in previous positions;
- Shared results with both successful and unsuccessful candidates and availing opportunities and processes to contest the recruitment/promotion decision.

## **Second: In the Promotion Process**

- Solid and active Performance Appraisal System as a tool for promotion
- A clear Complaint process to ensure transparency.

### **Elements of a possible incentive package should include:**

- Financial Compensation
- Work Conditions
- Clear standards of service performance and lines of accountability and fair and transparent reporting and grieving mechanisms and equal opportunities (including gender and disability lens)
- Training and development opportunities
- Motivation and Job Satisfaction
- Recognition, rewards structures and promotion system.

## Conclusion

The training and capacity building of civil service employees are critical for the successful provision and management of public goods and services. Without a coherent system of developing competent managers, the quality of the Egyptian civil service sector will continue to deteriorate. This paper focuses on improving the recruitment and training of mid to senior level managers in order to enhance their capacities for the better execution and implementation of public policies.

This paper proposes that one of the best ways to enhance the capacities of civil service employees is to utilize practices from countries such as Singapore, France, and India, who have been successful in the civil service reform agenda. These countries have utilized technical means, such as web-based talent management systems, in addition to the administering of rigorous competency exams to guarantee that only those of the highest caliber will be employed and entrusted with advancing public interests.

On its part, the Egyptian government has issued the new Civil Service Law No. 81/2016, concerning the recruitment and selection of senior and mid-level management. This 2016 Law sets forth a framework for the reform of the bureaucracy. It introduces a human resource development approach in government agencies; transparent announcement of vacant positions, standardized testing to fill them. In addition, it increases the proportion of base pay to variable pay and organizes a system of voluntary early retirement, and it establishes a new system for assessing employee performance thus allowing career advancement for those who excel (Bahaa-Eldin, 2015).

Yet this paper encourages the Egyptian government to take further steps in reforming senior management and leadership with these following proposals. First, to prepare the public service environment to be more responsive to the changes initiated in Law 81/2016, one should develop the goals and objectives of the civil service reform like a “Public Servant Competency Framework,” as well as developing a senior management competency based framework. This competency framework will detail the core competencies and skills needed for senior management or leadership positions. Secondly, the development of standardized national training packages to be based on the identified core skills, including accredited training services providers in different governorates to ensure quality and standardization of the training packages should occur. Lastly, a merit based system for selection and promotion should be established.

Above all, the recommendations provided in this paper provide the mechanisms by which the Egyptian government can operationalize its existing legal frameworks, in order to ensure that its civil service employees are provided with the tools to harness and exhibit their potentials as successful leaders and managers. Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector would essentially be reflected in the improved delivery of public service leading to citizens' satisfaction.

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