

THE PUBLIC POLICY HUB

Policy Brief 5

Building Capacity of Government Leaders in Egypt

2018

The Egyptian bureaucracy is an expansive body employing a large population of civil servants. Reforms to the recruitment, selection, training, promotion and retention of civil servants may have direct bearing on improving the effectiveness of the government sector.

The “graduate policy” initiated by the Egyptian government in 1961 to recruit all graduates of higher education into the public sector was a major contributor to the enormous increase in the number of Egyptian civil servants. In 2001, the total number of public servants reached 5.5 million and between 2015-2016 it reached 5.8 million⁽¹⁾. As the result of a new government policy halting all new employment in the public sector, the number of public servants decreased by 800,000 in the last quarter of 2017⁽²⁾. The policy aimed to downsize bureaucracy, increase its efficiency, and decrease its burden on the national budget. Despite these initial reforms, the prospect of enhancing the technical capacity of the existing public civil servants remains a challenge.

Policy Recommendations

This Brief draws upon international best practices to inform opportunities for reform that may enhance the capacities of Egypt’s civil servants. A web-based talent management system, taken from the Singaporean experience, can benefit Egypt by providing a strategic and coherent hiring process and providing a unified and standardized system of such processes for successive administrations. Furthermore, such a system would allow for a more effective and accessible means of information-sharing. The experiences of the French and Indian systems demonstrate that competitive exams are key in the recruitment and subsequent training of civil service employees. The Egyptian civil service would benefit from formal, specialized schools for recruitment and training of potential managers. Currently, the National Management

(1) Sayed, F. (2004). Innovation in public administration: the case of Egypt. United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

(2) http://www.masrawy.com/news/news_economy/de-tails/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

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The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors and or editors and do not reflect AUC policies or views.
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in Egypt in an attempt to expose young graduates to practical policy solutions.



Institute (NMI) can serve the function of a formal institute for recruitment and training, including the administration of recruitment exams. Furthermore, it will be beneficial, as with the case of India, to include external actors, especially psychologists, who will be able to assess the emotional intelligence of potential recruits, and determine their preparedness to handle the emotional sides of their work.

It is essential that the Egyptian government continue to make use of tools that are already in place. Thus our policy Brief further provides the following recommendations in order to build a framework for capacity-building programs for the civil service in conjunction with the new Civil Service Law 81/2016. This should be complemented with a number of procedural plans to ensure the operationalization of the law. Domestic agencies such as the NMI and the Central Agency for Organization and Administration are well equipped to undertake the task of enforcing existing laws.



We propose a three-stage roadmap for reform:

1) Institutionally preparing the scene for reform: The first step is to prepare the environment to be more receptive to the changes initiated in Law 81/2016. Following this a “Public Servant Competency Framework” as well as a senior management competency-based framework should be developed. A senior management competency framework will detail the core competencies and skills needed for a senior managerial or other leadership position. Linked to this is the development of 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 effective and efficient planning.

2) Training potential and existing calibers for senior management and leadership positions: Standardized national training packages should be based on identified core and specialized skills and should also include a mapping of potential training service 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. Using 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 civil servants to feel a sense of belonging, to protect public property, and to fulfill personal goals through the fulfillment of state goals, ultimately ensuring the well-being of the Egyptian society⁽³⁾. The NMI also provides programs for senior and mid-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 in the governmental and private sectors⁽⁴⁾.

The Excellence Center of the NMI provides professional information technology services. These services can be best utilized if the Egyptian government uses the Singaporean PRAISE system as a model for their own web-based talent management. As noted earlier, the PRAISE system merged 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. In addition to establishing the principle of fair treatment for customers and addressing citizen complaints in various areas of civil service affairs⁽⁵⁾, the CAO also works to develop a system of inspection to ensure the authenticity and efficiency of employees' performance.

3) Retaining high-caliber candidates in the public sector: The third phase focuses on retaining qualified candidates by operationalizing a merit-based selection and promotion system of middle and senior-level positions. In Egypt, mobility within the civil service system and promotion are only available to internal candidates. Law 81/2016 specifies procedures and requirements for applications to middle and senior managerial position. In order to employ a merit-based system, the tools below can be used to ensure fair and transparent selection and promotion:

(3) http://www.nmi.gov.eg/StaticPage.aspx?SP=Special_Initiation.aspx

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

(5) <http://www.caoa.gov.eg/WebForms/ContentPages.aspx?OimBWvdgyVJ2XR7irlQgZKeyOHqMdflLLOQ41IVpdkuQ=>



The Selection Process

- Develop a “job analysis” for vacant positions
- Provide written “job descriptions”
- Develop associated “person specification”
- Implement a standard application
- Develop a clear scoring scheme based on the person specification
- Use solid track records to attest to the candidates’ capabilities, qualities, and achievements in previous positions
- Share results with both successful and unsuccessful candidates and availing opportunities and processes to contest the recruitment/promotion decision

The Promotion Process

- Adhere to a solid and active Performance Appraisal System as a tool for promotion
- Use a clear complaint process to ensure transparency

Incentive Package Elements

- Financial compensation
- 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
- Recognition, rewards structures and promotion system

Conclusion

The recommendations offered in this Brief 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. Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector will be reflected in the improved delivery of public service leading to citizens’ satisfaction.

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