Institutional impact of the Management Institute for National Development (MIND) on public sector reform in Jamaica

Claire Spence

1. The Management Institute for National Development: background information

The Management Institute for National Development (MIND), is Jamaica's premier public sector training institution. It has a national mandate for human resources development and the provision of quality training and consultancy to the public sector with a view of ensuring the delivery of efficient customer services to the nation.

The Institute was established in 1994. The Divisions comprising MIND had their beginnings during the fiscal year 1974 - 1975. The training Divisions of MIND are:

• Division of Management Studies and Organisational Development (DMSOD);

• Division of Finance, Accounts and Secretarial Studies; and

• Mandeville Outreach Training Centre.

Division of Management Studies and Organisational Development:

The Division of Management Studies and Organisational Development (DMSOD) is mandated to facilitate the process of organisational development and is responsible for imparting work-related knowledge and for building the skills of executives, senior and middle managers and of front line supervisors. This Division of the Institute also has responsibility for the development of the human resource management cadre, namely; personnel officers; trainers; and industrial relations specialists.

With regard to management education, this Division of the Institute delivers the Certificate in Public Administration, a University of the West Indies Course which is aimed at strengthening the management competencies of public officials.

The Division is the only organisation in Jamaica which provides training in Project Formulation, Appraisal and Management on an ongoing basis.

Division of Finance, Accounts and Secretarial Studies:

The mission of the Division of Finance, Accounts and Secretarial Studies (DFASS) is to promote the highest standard of professional and technical competence and practice in persons serving public sector bodies in the discharge of duties relating to Financial Administration, Accounts and Secretarial Skills.

The Division is further divided into two distinct Units:

(i) Finance and Accounts; and

(ii) Secretarial Unit.

The Finance and Accounts Unit is further divided into:

• Financial Management;

• Accounting; and

• Supplies Management.

The Secretarial Unit consists of:

• Court/Conference Reporting; and

• Secretarial Studies.

Mandeville Outreach Training Centre:

The Mandeville Outreach Training Centre functions effectively in its role as a multi-disciplinary institution, delivering training to its customers in Cornwall and Middlesex. The Centre has the capability to deliver and/or facilitate the delivery of many of the programmes which are currently being delivered at DMSOD and DFASS.

Mission:

The Management Institute for National Development has as its mission theme: “Exists to provide demand-led quality training and consultancy to the public sector which will enhance the delivery of efficient and effective service to the nation”.

The Management Institute for National Development is scheduled to come on stream as an Executive Agency during April 1997 and the proposed organisational structure includes a number of critical changes.
• The Research and Consultancy Unit is being renamed Policy Research and productivity Studies.

• There will be a Unit in charge of Public Affairs and Outreach.

• Three strategic positions have been created, namely: Marketing Specialist; Public Relations Officer; and Curriculum Development Specialist.

• The Corporate Services Division which formerly carried out general administrative functions in addition to finance and accounts, will have an expanded role which will include Finance and Accounts, Human Resources Management, General Administration and a Typing Pool.

Management and status:

The Institute is recognised as a specialised institution within the Efficiency and Reform Directorate of the Cabinet Secretariat. The Dean of Studies reports directly to the Director General of the Efficiency and Reform Directorate (ERD), Dr. Garnet Brown, C.D., J.P.

Cabinet in recognising the need for an institution of this nature to have a measure of independence, has established a Board of Management to advise the Cabinet Secretary/Head of the Public Service on matters pertaining to training and development, as well as certain aspects of policy.

Performance 1993-1996:

See Table 1: Trainee days delivered by campus - 1993 - 1996.


During the last fiscal year a greater effort was made to deliver demand-led programmes. These programmes included:

• Total Quality Management Training;
• Computer Training for Secretaries and Management Staff;
• Accounting;
• Training for Court Administrators;
• Training in the Financial Management Information System (FMIS);
• Corporate Planning Training for all Ministries and Departments; and
• Office Interior Designing and Decorating for Office Managers.

This paper will not discuss in any detail the government of Jamaica budgetary support for MIND. However, the achievements of the institution have been accomplished on a total budget (capital plus recurrent) of J$52,382,000 or at current value US$1,496,628 (1996 figures).

2. The needs and challenges of public sector reform

Governments in the developing world are sharply focused on achieving a more efficient and responsive public sector. The thrust to reform the public sector has implications for the way in which public agencies are managed and the level of performance required of the workers.

Since gaining independence in 1962, the scope and size of the Jamaican public sector has grown substantially to include 13 ministries, over 30 departments and more than 300 statutory bodies and public companies. The public sector now has a staff complement of over 78,000 with 35,000 employed directly in the central civil service. The need for reform of this large and generally unresponsive bureaucracy is unquestioned. In spite of a number of attempts at reform in the 1980s the public sector has not been able to shed the image of being an obstacle to achieving state objectives rather than a facilitator. Between 1984-1988 under the Administrative Reform Programme (ARP) the government sought to strengthen the management of human and financial resources. This was followed in 1991 by a Corporate Planning and Budgeting Programme throughout the service and in 1994 by a Tax Administrative Reform Project (TAXARP). These projects have seen some minimal success in specific areas, but certainly not the wide scale changes that were envisioned. It is yet to be seen whether or not TAXARP will accomplish its objectives.

In response to the minimal success of the previous programmes, the government has embarked on a modernisation effort in which the focus is different. In Jamaica the reform process is being spear headed by the Public Sector Modernisation Project (PSMP), financed jointly by the Government of Jamaica and the World Bank with support from the Overseas Development Agency (ODA). The Public Sector Modernisation Project differs from the other attempts, in that it is not attempting a wholesale reform of the entire public sector. Rather, it has adopted an incremental approach which is focused on elements that the government feels it can fully support and manage effectively. The project has four main components:

1. Privatisation.
2. Procurement.
3. Review of two core ministries.
4. The creation of 13 Executive Agencies.

The work culture of the Caribbean civil service has been well documented and the traditional level of performance of public servants is legendary. The reform is as much about strengthening human capacity, as it is about cost containment and effective management. One cannot occur without the other, hence it is recognised that effective public management requires top quality managers.

In seeking to achieve the effectiveness which reform promises, the government will have to ensure that the quality of staff in the public sector is such, that it can effect change. The reformed public sector will require highly motivated managers with the requisite skills, knowledge and abilities to lead these new type of public sector agencies. The political consequences however of widespread retrenchment would almost certainly prohibit the replacement of large sections of the current public sector staff. Hence the challenge of retraining these individuals to respond to the changes, in both the organisational performance measures and organisation culture will fall on MIND.

The Management Institute for National Development has the responsibility to provide training for members of staff at all levels, within the public sector. This means that, the Institute will be required to play a lead role in the reform process, and will require some changes in the design/types of training programmes that is offered by the Institute. Some pivotal issues in the management of public entities of the future, will have to be incorporated in the curricula for training senior and middle level public sector managers.

The mission of the Institute speaks to the provision of demand-led training and consultancy. This demand must be approached from two perspectives:

1. The demand of the overall public sector; and
2. Individual demand.

While difficult, this is by no means an unachievable vision. As the reform process unfolds, it will increasingly be found that the two distinct needs converge in important ways. As the public sector modernizes it will demand new skills, which were originally thought relevant to the private sector and hence public sector workers to be competitive in the wider labour market will also seek to acquire those skills. As the line between public and private sector management styles become blurred, the Institute will be required to respond to what will become generic
needs in management.

Perhaps even more important than training in management principles, the Institute will be charged with the all important task of helping to develop a new culture within the public sector. Issues which were previously given little regard, such as customer service, performance standards and accountability will now have to be integral in the professional vocabulary of all public sector workers.

The first task of the Institute will be to help agencies poised for change, to understand what these changes will mean to them in terms of staff training and development needs. Where the requisite skills are absent, the Institute, where possible, will be responsible for providing training in these areas. Hence MIND must have in residence three specific capabilities:

1. To perform needs assessment for other agencies;
2. To respond to the training needs of these agencies; and
3. To evaluate the impact of its training on these agencies.

What this means essentially, is that MIND's involvement in training in the public sector will have to encompass all phases of the training process.

3. Meeting the challenge: the Management Institute for National Development as an executive agency

As a strategy to enable the Institute to meet the challenges with which it is confronted, MIND will be transformed into an Executive Agency in 1997. An Executive Agency is essentially a quasi-autonomous government agency functioning along the lines of private sector management philosophy and being responsible for financial and human resource management and the delivery of the services specified in its terms of reference. The top management team of an Executive Agency will be on contract and will have similar powers over the resources of the organisation as managers in the private sector. The exact adaptation of the model that will be implemented in Jamaica may vary somewhat from that in effect in other parts of the world, but the core features of accountability, performance targets, and measurability will remain in tact. The role of MIND will therefore be to help empower other agencies to meet the requirements under the Citizens Charter. The Charter for Civil Society as set out by the Prime Minister, in December 1994, outlines the type of service that public sector clients have a right to expect. These services include:

- Accurate information;
- A knowledgeable and courteous staff;
- Easy to understand procedures;
- Speedier processing of documents; and
- Reduction of time waiting in lines.

The Management Institute for National Development has been handed the responsibility to sensitize 13 critical agencies on the Citizens Charter and has been delivering Customer Service training to public contact officers, supervisors and managers in these agencies.

This is an important step in the creation of a service oriented, efficient and client centered public sector. The reorientation from regulation centered to a client centred machinery, is pivotal to any type of reform in the public sector. This reorientation can only be effected through a retraining of personnel within the system.

To fulfill its responsibilities, the Institute will be undergoing some institutional strengthening of its own. This will be mainly in the areas of curriculum development and purchasing of equipment. The curriculum is being reviewed to ensure that the courses being offered will help to sharpen the competitive edge for both the Institute and the participants in these courses. The Management Institute for National Development has to be concerned about its competitiveness in a market where there are several other recognised Institutes from which public sector managers can buy their training. It is imperative therefore that MIND strive to achieve its mission of offering ‘demand-led quality training’.

Other areas that the Institute has been mandated to develop are:

- commitment to excellence at the work place;
- being proactive in conducting reform related research;
- Providing the sort of leadership which infuses confidence in the minds of those who are part of the institution and those who enter the institution to be educated and trained;
- to define clearly its business objectives and goals and develop strategies through which such goals and objectives can be achieved; and
- to re-engineer its business processes to make it more effective, efficient and responsive to the public sector.

4. Policy to focus on training

Too often there is the claim that the training that is offered by various institutions do nothing to enhance policy implementation and hence, the training is irrelevant. As part of its effort to provide training that responds to real needs in the public sector, MIND will also strengthen
its capacity to understand public policy formulation and management in a variety of areas and its implications for managers in the public sector who are required to oversee the implementation of these policies. This will be the role of our Policy Research and Productivity Studies Unit which is being proposed as part of the new Executive Agency structure.

The Management Institute for National Development has a special role to play under the National Industrial Policy, the government of Jamaica's strategic plan for growth and development. The Policy states that "special attention will be given to a comprehensive evaluation and reshaping of the way training is offered by the Management Institute for National Development".

5. Challenges and possibilities

The Management Institute for National Development sees itself as a catalyst for change in the public sector. Providing there is support for the Institute at the governmental level, the ministerial level, and accompanying fiscal provisions, MIND feels confident that it will respond effectively to the challenge of change.

The Institute itself must understand the dynamics of the international environment in which Caribbean public sector managers must operate. In order to train public sector workers to rethink their roles, the Institute must keep a step ahead of its clients. It must be aware of the new management techniques and the respective social political and economic environment in the Caribbean in which these techniques will be used. Issues of policy, the impact of government programmes, why governments make the decisions they do and how this impacts/affects the managers of these policy decisions, must be at the forefront of the Institute's thoughts if it is to lead the management of national development.

The training of the political directorate is also a challenge that MIND will have to address more fully in the near future. The public sector is shaped and led by the policies of the government. This is an inescapable reality which managers must accommodate. This makes for a potential conflict unless both parties involved in the process understand what their respective roles are and the rules that govern these roles. As a result it is becoming increasingly clear that each side of the equation must have a clear perspective of the other. The Management Institute for National Development has a role to play in this harmonisation of purpose.

Currently, MIND offers training to public servants from other islands of the Caribbean, although on a limited scale. As we expand our facilities we hope to be able to directly address some of the training needs of these islands on a more sustained basis. This can be attacked on two fronts namely, the training of workers and research on the policy environment that will inform the training.

Research has to become an integral part of the management of the public sector. Information gained from feed back surveys, client suggestion schemes, staff suggestion schemes, customer perception survey, worker attitude surveys can all be used to improve an organisation. Clients and workers both feel tremendously empowered when they realise that their suggestions have been included in the management of the agency. The Management Institute for National Development needs to lead this crusade, by using these techniques in our own organisation and by training managers in the "hows" and "whys" of their use.

As public sector organisations move from being administered to being managed, participatory management will become important. The Management Institute for National Development has borrowed the Asian concept of the Work Improvement Team (WIT), as a way of strengthening worker participation at the Institute. This is a concept which is not a part of the work culture in the Jamaican public sector, however we intend to show by our success that it is not incompatible with our work attitudes in the Caribbean and that it can play a significant role in transforming our organisations. Using our success we will then attempt to introduce the whole quality team idea in our training of senior executives for use in their own organisations.

6. Conclusion

The Management Institute for National Development must lead change on two fronts, by the inculcation of quality consciousness in its own workers; and secondly by training other public sector managers to lead change in their organisations.

There is a strong commitment to reforming the Jamaican public sector and hence MIND must see its role as integral to the process of change. We must fulfill our mission to train a new calibre of managers and a more customer centred workforce if the process is to succeed. Reform essentially begins not with structures, but with attitudes, and it is these attitudes that will have to be shaped through training.

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