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QUALITY LEADERSHIP FOR EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE IN AFRICA

Edited by
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FOREWORD

This book emanates from the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) 35th Roundtable Conference held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 18th – 22nd November 2013 under the theme “Quality Leadership for Efficient and Effective Management of Public Service in Africa”.

From the deliberations and presentations in the conference, it was evident that Africa is a continent blessed with vast and valuable resources that if well harnessed and utilised could boost development to greater levels. It was emphasised that quality leadership is pivotal to development in the African nations. The continent’s potential could therefore be optimally realised through leadership that can stimulate innovation and sustain stewardship in the management of resources.

While it is true that there has been visible progress in service delivery across the continent, much more needs to be done if the continent is to realise its goals. The conference illustrated that lack of quality leadership continues to reduce the continent to a vicious circle of development redundancy.

This book therefore, concentrates on the importance of quality leadership. Through practical and theoretical lenses, the book explores leadership experiences, strategies and systems with an aim of fostering quality leadership in the continent. Africa needs to embrace a leadership that nurtures and sustains reforms, professionalisation and modernisation of the African public service. The book captures various observations, experiences and case studies detailed by different authors drawn from across Africa.

As I conclude, I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to the editors, Mr. George K. Scott and Prof. Malcolm Wallis who have endlessly reviewed this book. I also acknowledge the priceless contribution of the AAPAM Secretariat who have successfully steered this book project.

Further, I thank the AAPAM Executive Committee whose commitment and support continues to shape and sustain AAPAM through effective and efficient leadership. I sincerely appreciate all persons and institutions who have contributed or supported AAPAM in its programmes and projects including the production this book.

Finally, it is my humble submission that we all may learn from the experiences and knowledge captured in this book.

Dr. Roland Msiska
AAPAM President
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We especially appreciate Prof. Malcolm Wallis, the co-editor of this book and other AAPAM books like *Citizen Engagement, Decentralisation and Service Delivery in Africa*, and also the book on *Performance Management for Improving Public Service Delivery in Africa*. We also acknowledge his immense support to AAPAM as the Chief Editor of African Journal of Public Administration and Management (AJPAM).

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AAPAM thanks all the authors who have contributed to this book. We appreciate them for sharing their practical and academic wealth of knowledge that has entirely formed this publication.

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G. K. Scott  
Secretary General-AAPAM
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EDITORS’ INTRODUCTION

George K. Scott and Malcolm Wallis

Apart from the 35th AAPAM Round-table Conference (RTC) in 2013, the association has in the past organised for forums to deal with issues of quality in the public service. In 1999, the association held a Round-Table Conference in Kampala, Uganda under the theme “Quality Management Assurance in Africa”. Most of the AAPAM programmes are indeed focused on the betterment of public service with a reference to service delivery.

There have been other RTCs where issues related to quality have been aired. For example, in Arusha, Tanzania, in 2006, presentations were made on quality service and accountability and on what citizens say about service delivery, the latter reporting on the very important and relevant ‘Afrobarometer’ project which surveys public attitudes to government, clearly an exercise of some interest and relevance for participants and public services in general (AAPAM 2006: 16-19). At the same forum, the Vice-President of the host country, His Excellency Dr. Ali Mohamed Shein spoke about quality in his opening speech. He observed that, ‘the quality of public service delivery in Tanzania, although improving, is still unacceptable’. He went on to commit the government he was then serving to a reversal of this (AAPAM 2006: 91).

Thus, the 2013 theme ‘Quality Leadership for Effective and Efficient Management of Public Service in Africa’ is an extension of an issue which has recurred within AAPAM circles for at least two decades. What has emerged over the years is that quality management and leadership can be seen both as a technical and somewhat specialised concern on the one hand, whilst on the other hand, it has tended to be viewed as an all-embracing concern on how well governments are performing on quality matters. The term thus can be used to analyse such apparently very different issues as the performance of a country’s head of state and the standard of the water supplied to a remote village. Both are quality matters which can be included within this broad framework. The 2013 RTC reflected a little of this diversity as this introduction will endeavour to demonstrate.

LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY: UNDERSTANDING THE KEY WORDS

Both these terms need clarification from the beginning as they often cause uncertainty, more so because they were key terms used within the RTC. While the meaning of the term leadership is often seen as relatively clear in the governance context, it still needs some elaboration. It is a somewhat more difficult story when it comes to defining quality. Both these terms defy the concise definitions which can be found in
a dictionary. For this reason, introducing this book requires a short discussion on the words hoping that it will bring greater clarity than is often achieved in practice.

**Leadership** is often described as being different from management. The reasoning is partly to do with hierarchy. The higher in the hierarchy someone is, the greater is the likelihood of the term being relevant. Thus, it is reasoned, for example, that a minister is a leader but most public servants working in his or her ministry are not. Some of them will be designated as managers when they occupy positions of authority. Others of higher ranks such as Director-Generals or Permanent Secretaries can also be regarded as leaders, although they may have to be managers too. Leadership in this sense is obviously associated with the exercise of authority. However, there are other important elements to be considered such as influencing stakeholders and followers; as well as elements of strategic planning such as visioning and demonstrating commitment to goals and values.

Nevertheless, the situation becomes more muddled because there is at least one complication. It is often just as appropriate to refer to leadership at lower levels of the hierarchy as well as at the top. Lower levels of leadership in the hierarchies of public services might be places where leaders of small groups of junior staff working in remote and difficult working and living conditions are found. This is the case in for example, the western parts of Botswana, northern Kenya and certain parts of Tanzania as discussed by Kimaro in her paper in this book.

Another example of leadership below the top of hierarchies would be the leadership of trade union officials in the public sector who may be only juniors in terms of their jobs. However, they could be simultaneously of senior status as elected officials on the ‘shop floor’ of a union representing workers in a public-sector industry. They may also be political as well as trade union leaders as in the case of a postal official of lowly rank in the United Kingdom who later became a leading figure in the Labour Party and a senior minister in that country’s government (Johnson 2015).

Another type of leader falling outside of the hierarchical view would be leaders who emerge within informal structures of organisations without necessarily occupying a high official position. These structures are often referred to by sociologists as ‘groups’ which may consist of a small number of people who interact in work places as well as in other contexts such as faith-based organisations and schools (Seedat-Khan, Uys, Kaziboni and du Plessis 2016: 351). In government, for example, a group might consist of immigration officials at an airport who interact socially at tea breaks, for example, in the context of which they may discuss work (and quality) related issues such as working hours and interpretation of instructions from within the department concerned.