

BEST PRACTICES IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT SERIES



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This is a series of articles that PSCBS with support from the Belgian Development Agency (BTC) has initiated under the "Support to Capacity Development in Rwanda Project".

The Public Sector Capacity Building Secretariat (PSCBS) was created in August 2009 to guide, facilitate and coordinate the implementation of capacity building interventions in the public sector. Providing information and analysis on best practices in capacity development interventions is part of the responsibilities of PSCBS.

Experience has revealed that capacity development is too often considered as "capacity gaps" and referring to an implicit ideal situation where there is enough capacity. PSCBS recognizes the importance of paying attention to the complexity of capacity issues and the way they are embedded in a given context.

We at PSCBS acknowledge that there exist some strong well functioning institutions in Rwanda that could serve as reference cases for best practices. In this regard, we have identified SSFR as one of such institutions.

A Success Story in Capacity Development in the Rwandan Public Sector: The Social Security Fund of Rwanda

Background and Organizational Structure

The Social Security Fund of Rwanda (CSR) was created during the colonial rule and catered for contractual workers in Ruanda-Urundi and the Congo-Belge. After Rwanda's independence, the decrees were amended by the Government of Rwanda to formulate the Decree Law of 15th November 1962 marking the official existence of Social Security Fund of Rwanda. The laws currently facilitating and enforcing the good functioning of the institution include the 1974 social security law and the 2003 amendment.

The Fund, under the tutelage of MINECOFIN is mandated to provide social security services to employees in Rwanda. It employs a total of 231 people, from which 143 work in the head office in Kigali and others work in local offices in all 30 Rwandan districts. For the purposes of efficiency in managing the Fund, the Board is subdivided into various management committees each with distinct duties and the organization is structured in 10 departments.

The achievements of the CSR...

Since it was reformed in 2005, CSR has registered a lot of successes. By the year 2002, CSR had 4,099 employers compared to 11,832 in 2009. The number of declared employees shifted from 179,720 in 2002 to 306,561 in 2009. On average, employers and employees increased at an average rate of 16.8% and 8.5% respectively. Between 2005 and 2010 its major achievements include:

- Decentralized services with branch offices in all 30 districts, where all services are available.
- Remarkable contributions to Rwandan Economy with investments, job creation and revenue generation projects.
- Increased number of timely and true declarations through audits and awareness raising initiatives geared at employers.
- Improved service delivery through new online services like registration, inquiries, and checking of account situation.
- Backlog of over 7 million un-computerized declarations from 1963 to 1993 entered into the database to speed up processing of benefits. Processing a dossier takes maximum 5 days now.

How did the Social Security Fund of Rwanda reach such a success? A story of capacity development...

Human resource development and management for motivated and skilled staff

"The success is largely attributed to our staff of fresh graduates who are keen on learning new things" Henry Gaperi, the former Director General said. "What the institution aims at is to have good and well trained professionals, to ensure that they serve to the best of what is expected from them and to ensure clients receive quality services in a specified time" Henry further emphasized.

The institution engages in both internal and external training programs for its staff. Departments are asked to present training requirements based on their priorities to enable successful and effective training. Furthermore CSR created an opportunity for its staff to widen their knowledge through opening an in-house library equipped with updated text books in the fields of Law, Finance, Construction, Real Estate, Investment Analysis, Planning and professional courses in Accounting.

The process of inducting new staff members entails organizing meetings with different heads of units to acquaint new members with a whole range of activities undertaken by the institution and conducting training on specific areas in which the staff will be operating. The institution then ensures that individual capacities are utilized on the job through proper allocation of tasks with regular monitoring and evaluation as well as coaching.

CSR's human resource policy is geared towards skills development, promoting innovation and creativity among staff, ensuring efficiency and competency and motivation of all staff. On top of that, the institution ensures that all staff are knowledgeable of systems and procedures by involving the staff in the process of designing these procedures and monitoring their application.

However, challenges of staff retention exist in this institution as well. Like in most other public institutions, it's not easy to keep staff on board. For this reason the CSR tries to make the job more attractive by applying a job rotation system. The objective is to expose the employees to different experiences so that they develop a wider variety of skills and gain additional insights into the institution.

The institution has put in place a staff recognition scheme as one of the rewarding systems. Staff members with excellent performance and those who produce relevant and useful innovations are rewarded by the institution's management team. All this intends to motivate staff

and to promote research and development in the Social Security Fund of Rwanda.

Leadership for change and organizational development...

"It's not only about training and getting the right people on the right positions within the institution, it's also about management" explained Gaperi. Therefore Social Security Fund developed various management tools, legal instruments and plans which include for example policy issues, processes and internal procedures.

One of the ways in which the institution's top management provides leadership for change is through their decision making system. The top management has initiated a bottom-up system which involves all staff in the transformation process. The institution strengthened the commitment for change by ensuring that all staff members understand the need for change and are capable of shouldering it. CSR manages the change process by involving all stakeholders and ensuring that they are part of the processes.

CSR also uses a specific information network technology which facilitates information sharing between the headquarters and the branches all over the country. The former Director General asserted that "unlike before, currently there is no need for people queuing at the headquarters since similar services can be accessed in the districts".

Lessons learnt

The Social Security Fund of Rwanda has become a success story because of internal as well as external factors. A strong outside demand coming from Government requests a well-functioning social security system and enables the well functioning of CSR by assuring adequate legislation and providing CSR with a clear mandate.

Parallel to this, internal changes took place to improve the institution's functioning; the organization developed an efficient organizational structure and implemented a clear HR policy focusing on capacity creation (mainly through training and providing access to information), capacity utilization (by setting clear objectives and expectations towards their staff) and retention (various measures to keep staff motivated, not only through financial incentives but through possibilities for personal development, active participation, creating space for innovation and creativity and rewarding schemes recognizing good practice)

In the CSR, the organizational culture makes changes possible. This way, the organization keeps improving and stays dynamic, ready to tackle new challenges.

Nominations for other public institutions that have demonstrated good capacity development practices can be sent to any of the following emails: info@pscbs.gov.rw; peter.malinga@pscbs.gov.rw