



**CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT
PERSONNEL IN THE LEGISLATIVE SECTOR**

Research Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The School of Governance at the University of the Witwatersrand was requested by the Head of Capacity Building at Parliament, RSA, to research the Human Resource Development needs of administrative and support staff in Parliament and the nine provincial Legislatures. The intention of the study is three-fold:

- To assess the capacity and skills needs of Administration and support staff at Parliament, RSA and the 9 Legislatures
- To identify gaps/areas that need strengthening in the capacitation process
- To recommend a way forward that will assist both Parliament, RSA and the Legislatures to support current capacity building initiatives, so that respective role players are better supported in fulfilling their Constitutional mandates.

The methodology is based predominantly on desktop research of available documents, reports and material. Critical review of such material will then be used to inform future plans around strengthening of administrative capacity within the Legislative sector. In addition, a set of interviews was conducted with HR personnel in Parliament and the Western Cape legislature and a short questionnaire was administered to HRD personnel in seven other legislatures.

Formal interviews were conducted with HRD personnel in Parliament and the Western Cape Legislature. In addition, a questionnaire was administered to HRD personnel from the other provincial legislatures in a workshop convened in East London by the Manager of Capacity Building in Parliament.

According to the Skills Planning Manager in Parliament, the key skills deficits were in the following areas:

- Legal skills for Committee support;
- Financial management skills; and
- Research support for Parliamentary Committees.

The training priorities were identified as follows:

- Internal Auditing especially with a view to ensuring a better understanding of the work of the Auditor-General;
- Management and Leadership Skills;

- Legal skills – including research skills, and legal content advice
- Basic Understanding of the Public Financial Management Act (PFMA) and the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA).

In terms of available funding, limited funding was provided by Parliament in the form of bursaries for university study. No PSETA-funded skills development programmes were currently in place.

The HR Manager in the Western Cape Legislature emphasized the need for technical training linked to be linked to skills requirements, particularly in the following areas: Legislative Processes; Information Technology; and Finance (especially relating to GRAPP).

The legislature is currently investing about R400 000 in short-course training (the mandated 1% of its budget). In addition, some funding is provided for study towards formal qualifications – degrees, diplomas, certificates.

The legislature's training priorities were identified as follows:

- Automation – IT skills to develop and implement automation processes;
- Technical, on-the-job skills in financial management, research to support committees; and
- Developing training materials.

It was suggested that certificate courses (3 months), especially on-line courses, were needed to address the skills challenges in the legislature.

At a workshop hosted by Parliament's Capacity Building Manager, a questionnaire was administered to the participants who were HRD managers in the provincial legislatures.

The questionnaire was completed by personnel from the following provinces: Eastern Cape (3); Free State; Limpopo (2); KwaZulu-Natal (2); Mpumalanga (2); Northern Cape (2); and North West. In addition, two questionnaires were completed by personnel from Parliament.

The responses are summarised below.

Question 1: What are the most critical skills shortages in your legislature?

In total, the following were considered to be equally important: management and leadership skills; IT; Financial Management and legal skills.

Other skills deficits that were recognised included the following: project management; government communications; wellness; monitoring and evaluation; parliamentary proceedings; human resources management; corporate governance; legislative drafting;

Question 2: Strategies to address skills shortages

These strategies included the following in order of importance: bursaries/scholarships; external training programmes; and internal training programmes

Question 3: Nature of internal training programmes

These included: personnel administration; office management; Monitoring and Evaluation; Leadership and oversight; Bid committees; supply chain management; minute taking; report writing; internal policy and procedures; customer service; diversity management; basic computing

Question 4: Short-courses that could be provided by outside agencies

These included the following: project management; leadership strategy; policy development; risk management; health and safety; change management; organisation design and development; report writing; monitoring and evaluation; business analysis; strategic planning; financial management; supply chain management; conflict management; risk management

Question 5: Courses for which scholarships/bursaries are provided

Business and commerce; Public administration; IT; financial management; Legal studies; Human resources management; public management

Question 6: Other comments on HRD and Skills Development Needs

Limited budgets for HRD; lack of senior HRD leadership; lack of internal training capacity; skills development needs of lower-level employees are often ignored; skills development not a priority;

There appears to be widespread consensus across the HRD management personnel in the various legislatures about the challenges regarding capacity building and addressing current skills deficits.

First, there appears to be widespread agreement about the nature of the skills shortages. These relate broadly to management and leadership; financial management; information technology; legal skills; and research.

Second, there is consensus about inadequate budgets for training. However, it is not clear whether there are inadequate funds and/or inefficient utilization of available funding.

However, there does appear to be a wide discrepancy in the funding available for training across the legislatures; consider for example, that Gauteng spends three times as much as KZN, a province of similar proportions, or that Gauteng's expenditure is five times that of the Western Cape.

What is evident from the interviews and questionnaire information is that a substantial amount of education and training is taking place at various levels (internal short courses; external short courses; and formal university education and training directed towards certificates, diplomas and degrees). What is not clear however, is whether this is training purely for certification or whether the additional skills are actually enhancing the productivity of staff in the legislatures. In this regard, it seems appropriate to undertake an evaluation exercise to determine the relationship between investment in training and the associated outputs and outcomes.

Recommendation 1: Put in place strategies to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of current investment in training of legislature personnel.

It is clear from the data collected that various forms of training are taking place. It is not clear which of the short course training programmes are effective, if any. There needs to be a more coordinated strategy within the legislatures to determine how the

available resources could be used most effectively in enhancing the skills of employees. For example, there is little evidence that supports the view that 2-3 day courses are useful except in developing the most basic skills (e.g. Excel, and other computer programmes).

Consideration should therefore be given to prioritizing expenditure on longer-term programmes to develop both general and specific skills of legislature personnel. These could take various forms. It is critically important that discussions take place between the National School of Government and the legislatures on the nature, content, and length of such courses, as well as the type of certification that accompanies them.

For example, given the identified critical skills shortages in areas such as IT, Financial Management, Legal Skills, and Research, it may well be appropriate for the National School of Government to design, in consultation with the universities, a Certificate or Diploma for Legislature Personnel in some or all of these areas, or develop specific modules that could assist personnel acquire the skills they lack to undertake their designated functions more effectively.

Consideration needs to be given also to determining the most effective modes of delivery of programmes. In this regard, consideration must be given to the development of on-line programmes given its proven cost-effectiveness.

Finally, given the identified lack of leadership and management skills, it seems appropriate that the bulk of bursary and scholarship funding should be targeted towards the development of appropriate public administration and public management skills. Again, in this regard, the National School of Government, should work with the legislatures, and appropriate universities to develop relevant diploma and degree programmes. In this regard, much can be learned from the 'Governance and Leadership' programmes that have been developed for Members of Parliament and the Provincial Legislatures.

Recommendation 2: Identify appropriate short-courses and degree programmes to address the range of skills deficits identified amongst support personnel in Parliament and the provincial legislatures.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH BRIEF

The School of Governance at the University of the Witwatersrand was requested by the Head of Capacity Building at Parliament, RSA, to research the Human Resource Development needs of administrative and support personnel of Parliament and the nine provincial Legislatures. The intention of the study is three-fold:

- To assess the capacity and skills needs of Administration and support staff at Parliament, RSA and the 9 Legislatures
- To identify gaps/areas that need strengthening in the capacitation process
- To recommend a way forward that will assist both Parliament, RSA and the Legislatures to support current capacity building initiatives, so that respective role players are better supported in fulfilling their Constitutional mandates.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology is based predominantly on desktop research of available documents, reports and material. Critical review of such material will then be used to inform future plans around strengthening of administrative capacity within the Legislative sector. In addition, a set of interviews was conducted with HR personnel in Parliament and the Western Cape legislature and a short questionnaire was administered to HRD personnel in seven other legislatures.

The research is based on documentation and material that was provided to the research team, along with information available on the respective websites. Additional information such as job profiles and organisational structures would have been especially useful in assisting to evaluate to what extent the various Legislatures have the core capacity to fulfill their mandates as well as helping to suggest changes to their job profiles/structures where necessary to better enable them to fulfill their mandates.

More qualitative data could have been added were there opportunities to interview key role players and interact with relevant staff. It is acknowledged however that this has been a particularly “busy and tumultuous” for Parliament and the legislative sector. The fact that this project has continued, despite the constraints bears testimony to the

dedication of the various role players involved including the Legislative Capacity Building team at Parliament and legislatures and the support offered by the PSETA.

1.3 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Excerpts from the Sector Skills Framework and Requirements, Sector Plans and Annual updates (2011 – 2016) succinctly capture the urgent underlying need for this study within the Legislative sector:

“We have reviewed existing research conducted by SETAs and other skills planning bodies. In addition, we have considered key messages from Government on the state of sector skills plans contained in the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2012) and the Ministerial Task Team Report on SETA Performance (2013). These reports and many more have identified a need to improve quality and credibility of SSPs. According to the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2012) inadequate research capacity, a lack of economics, labour market and industry expertise, poor data management and lack of planning expertise have resulted in sector skills plans that have limited credibility and impact in their sectors.”

“There are various discussions and debates about the meaning of concepts in sector skills planning with no commonly agreed definition or understanding of terms. In South Africa concepts such as “skills” and “occupations” or “scarce skills” and “critical skills” are used interchangeably in the dialogue on skills development.”

It is against the backdrop of these accurate, overarching and pervasive insights that the project addressing capacity challenges within Parliament and the overall legislative sector have been birthed. As such they are instructive in guiding overall objectives and outputs of this project. The project will in turn inform, influence and feed into broader National and Provincial approaches to capacity building across the Legislative sector aimed at optimizing and strengthening capacity. With optimally functioning capacity in place, the outcome of the sector will be achieved and feed into the broader service delivery “machinery”.

Ultimately, positive societal impact, namely reconstruction and renewal, envisioned in The Constitution, will be achieved.

2. Skills Demand and Supply

2.1 Skills Demand

“Skills are defined as the necessary competencies that can be expertly applied in a particular context for a defined purpose and can either be linked to an occupation (skills shortage) or a gap in the skills profile within an occupation, i.e. a top-up skills requirement”.

“The demand for skilled labour is a derived demand – it arises from the demand for firms’ output and the need for employees to meet that demand”. (Sector Skills Framework and Requirements, Sector Plans and Annual updates, 2011 – 2016)

The urgent demand for skills in the Legislative sector is linked to a number of factors including:

- The actual growth within the sector
- Replacement skills due to a rapidly ageing workforce (the need to replace the skills of retiring staff)
- The need for more complex skills sets due to the increased complexity of the work required
- The need for increased skill specialization due to the need by customers (MPs and MPLs in this instance) to have ready access to subject matter experts and specialist skills.
- A rapidly changing technological context with the broader world of work, also have a profound impact on the nature, quality and combination of skills that the sector requires.

Bearing the above in mind, analysis of overall sectoral capacitation plans, it is clear that the training needs identified by the legislative sector represent a significant gap in themselves. Training needs identified form the very minimum of what would be required to adequately perform the work by support staff and as such demonstrate a lack of substantive understanding of the complex strategic trajectory that the sector has embarked on.

It is therefore important to look in greater depth at the increased complexity of skills and competencies required by an evolving Legislative sector:

With Committees being the so called “engine room” of how the work of the Legislative sector actually gets done, it stands to reason that the administrative and technical support offered by Committee support staff has to rapidly evolve. Some of these capacity developments would include:

Committee support staff comprising individuals with a broad range of skills including:

- Planning, coordination, organizational and logistical skills (as the success of MPs and MPLs depends to a large extent on efficacy in this domain).
- A deep understanding of the RSA model of Constitutional democracy coupled with a robust understanding of The Constitution and the broader service delivery value chain. It is only when staff have the requisite understanding of these factors that they will be able to locate/contextualise their own roles in how State machinery functions. To this end, they will have a fuller appreciation of the extent to which they can assist or delay the mandate of the sector.
- Strong conceptual skills: The role out of the Oversight and Accountability model and Public participation models make it imperative that technical support staff understand their key principles, but more importantly, staff must understand how these two aspects of the democratic value chain fit in with current service delivery challenges.
- Closely linked to the point above, is the necessity for support staff at all levels to be schooled in the fundamentals of politics (global, continental and national politics). Such political education should assist staff to understand the intricate interplay between politics – economics and social factors. Although staff will always have the right to have political preferences based on their role as civilians, it is critical that they understand the non-partisan nature of the institutions they serve and the importance of their own roles in enhancing sectoral priorities and ultimately service delivery. Experience within public service over the decades has lead me to this conclusion: we work in highly political contexts with various power plays, however we spend little time actually schooling staff in this vital area. We appear instead to subscribe to the simplistic notion that people will automatically “switch off” their political ideologies when at work and as they perform their roles. Even more dangerous is our

assumption that political understanding has no bearing on how people perform very critical work or the sense of urgency they apply in their roles.

- Scrutiny of the Oversight and Accountability Model suggests that support/technical staff must develop enhanced capacity in the area of critical and analytical thinking; ability to critically examine reports of entities being overseen as well as develop in the areas of monitoring and evaluation.

“In developing the oversight model, the need was identified for support services relating to the monitoring and tracking of issues between Parliament and the Executive, and on all other related matters within Parliament's broader mandate. An Oversight and Advisory Section ought to be created in response to the need identified. Its main functions will be to provide advice, technical support, co-ordination, and tracking and monitoring mechanisms on issues arising from oversight and accountability activities of members of Parliament and the committees to which they belong. The work of this section should also include the archiving of relevant information to facilitate the retention of institutional memory” (Excerpt from The Oversight and Accountability Model).

- Analysis of the Public Participation Model suggests a number of skills and capacities that technical staff will need in order to effectively assist MPs and MPLs fulfill their roles in this regard. Some of the skills required will be advanced communication skills (written and oral); stakeholder engagement skills; community mobilization skills along with enhanced skills in the areas of tact and diplomacy.

The complexity of skills required is also linked to the implications of a maturing democracy where much of the Legislative reform has already occurred during initial legislative stages and Constitutional imperatives have since shifted to a heightened focus on oversight and accountability of the Executive, public participation and enhancing the pro-activeness and efficacy of the legislative's sectors' ability to stimulate progressive legislation rather than reactively attending to laws that arise from the Executive.

Many of the skills needs of the sector fall within the realm of “scarce skills”. Scarce Skills refer to occupations in which there are a scarcity of qualified and experienced people, currently or anticipated in the future. The broader legislative sector have identified scarce skills shortages across management, professional, specialist, technical and clerical fields.

It is likely that there are scarce skills shortages because such skilled people are simply not available or in some instances do not meet employment criteria. In addition, as democracy matures, legislative skills requirements similarly become more specialized (often involving complex skills combinations and skills sets as described above)

In addition, to an increased need for more complex skills sets, the sector has the challenge of being highly reliant on what may be referred to as “Critical skills”.

Critical Skills refer to specific key/generic, “top up” skills that are usually developed within the organization. In other words, an emerging graduate from a university or even a highly qualified individual from another work sector, will still not be able to adequately/competently perform the work required by the sector, without having intense top up/on the job training.

Currently, there is minimal reliable data on critical skills needs of the sector. However if one extrapolates such needs from the collective strategic objectives of the legislative sector, one can predict that critical skills needs will be linked to oversight and accountability; effective law making; effective support services; public participation; good governance and modern business practices/ways of working (Excerpt from Sector Skills Strategy).

2.2 Skills Supply

Analysis of legislative sectoral vacancies, a rapidly ageing workforce and few systematic efforts to transfer institutional memory, point to an increasing difficulty the sector will have in meeting its’ skills needs. Skills supply does not meet demand needs for a number of reasons:

- A genuine skills shortage where the sector has considerable difficulty filling job vacancies simply because there are insufficient jobseekers with the required skills.

- Skill gaps whereby the sector is able to find people but they have only some of the skills required. This means that the sector gets the job done but not at the level required.
- Recruitment difficulties whereby there are enough job seekers with the required skills but they are unwilling to take up the work on offer, that is the sector is unable to attract the skills needed (due to salaries not being competitive, undesirable working conditions, issues linked to status, stereotypes about public service, etc)
- Public Service in general has not been positioned as a preferred work environment or an employer of choice
- At an aggregate level *labour supply* volume is affected by demographic trends, such as changes to the number of people entering the workforce and migration trends.
- At an individual level, people make labour force participation and career choices based on their personal motivations. They may be influenced by wages, career opportunities, working conditions and lifestyle choices.
- The supply of skilled labour is affected by the number of people training and obtaining qualifications within the context of RSA being a developmental state. Factors such as the length of time it takes to obtain the qualification; economic factors that influence the ability of people to study formally, access to career guidance and relevant work environment information, all contribute to inability to meet skills demands.
- Skills for the Legislative sector often involve development beyond formal qualifications, that is, they require top up training by legislative institutions along with informal training and development methods such as coaching, mentoring, job shadowing, job rotation, etc.

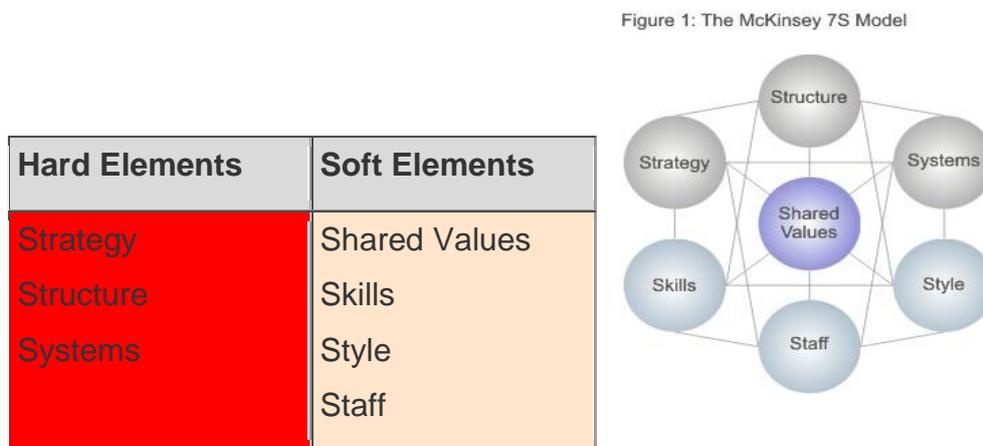
Best practice supports increasing and improving of technical/support to committees and ultimately MPs and MPLs. Research suggests that the following recommendations have been made in order strengthen committees and ultimately the capacity of support services to MPs and MPLs. Suggestions include:

- Content/subject advisers for each committee
- Dedicated researchers for each committee;

- Panels of experts;
- Tertiary institutions where curricula focus on skills for public service;
- Research institutions that can support critical research;

The legislative sector as a context is also subject to hard and soft factors that influence the overall work experience of staff within the sector

The McKinsey 7S model captures areas that need to be addressed within the sector with urgency. This model outlines seven interdependent factors which are categorized as either "hard" or "soft" elements in an organisation's functioning:



“Hard” elements are easier to define/identify and include strategy statements; organization structures, charts and reporting lines; as well as formal policies, processes and systems. It will be useful to analyse organisational structure and systems in order to evaluate the extent to which they enable staff to optimally perform their roles.

With respect to strategy, it is likely that strategies towards various aspects of the HR value chain below will need to be re-visited and if necessary overhauled, for example:

Attraction; selection and placement strategies; Induction and Onboarding strategies; Ongoing learning; performance management and talent management strategies, etc.

Apart from the hard technical skills that staff require, so called “Soft” elements on the other hand, are more difficult to describe, less tangible and more linked to underlying

culture/sub cultures. Ironically, it is these soft elements that influence the efficacy of hard elements.

There is no doubt that the sector would benefit immensely from a serious focus on the soft skills, leadership styles; shared values and optimization of organizational culture. Whilst hard skills will provide staff with the technical expertise required, it is very important for staff to experience the work environment as an enabling one. Enabling environments are usually characterized by involved, mature leadership styles; shared values; employee engagement and a deep connection to the goals of the organization.

In order to appreciate the complexity of the Human resource capacity needs in progressing the mandate of the legislative sector, it is necessary to appreciate the role people play in achieving organizational goals.



Figure 1: Achieving the Desired Future State

As Figure 1 succinctly portrays, for the sector to move towards the desired state, a number of processes need to occur:

- A more accurate picture of the current state is required
- Organisational transitions (leading; designing; realizing) need to be matched and synchronized with Individual transitions (ending old practices, exploring and beginning new ways of working)
- To facilitate an enabling environment for such shifts to occur, there needs to be a genuine focus on the areas of People; Process and Technology. The People component is often the most complex to address as change is often experienced with fear/resistance.

Closely linked to this is the Human Resource Value chain which focuses on the entire lifespan of a staff member within the organization.

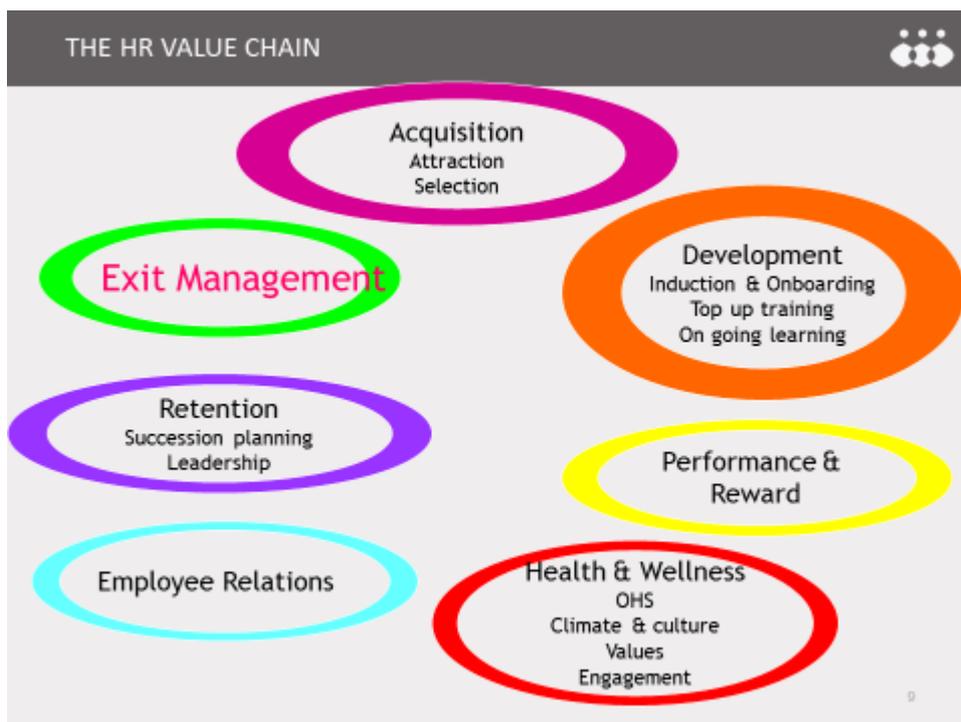


Figure 2: The Human Resource Value Chain

Often, soft elements are more complex to address and include:

- Skills specific to the legislative sector that need to be grown in house, for example: skills required by committee secretaries and committee assistants
- Professions that need to be shaped in order for them to be relevant and value adding to the legislative sector, for example: researchers; legal staff and content advisors
- Induction and onboarding institutional processes that support a smooth transition into the sector
- Climate and Culture which are often experienced as overly bureaucratic, negative and fear based with little room for innovation (particularly by graduates or staff from the private sector)
- Minimal institutional mentoring and coaching infrastructure to support the attraction, growth and retention of skills
- Authoritative & authoritarian Leadership Styles
- Less than optimal approaches to job profiling; remuneration and benefits; ongoing learning; performance management; employee wellbeing and exit management (severe challenges with the broader HR value chain)

Experience with the legislative sector also identifies the following challenges:

1. Lack of urgency in some areas to fill vacancies that have been budgeted for
2. Lack of ownership and accountability in some areas.
3. Competing priorities
4. Fragmented restructuring
5. Delayed decision making
6. Enabling policy framework

In addition to the matter of skills, how employment is characterised is also important in ensuring capacity building efforts are tailor made for the context and pitched at the right level.

2.3 Overall Employment Categorization

Employment categorization across the sector is quite broad, with several jobs being clustered together. Whilst this is understandable from an HR and reporting

perspective, the broadness of the categories prevents one from fully appreciating the specific roles and skills sets required in order for the sector to fulfill its mandate. To illustrate the point:

- Managers span both core and support services and include Chief Executives; Senior Officials; Legislators; Administration and Commercial managers; Production and Specialised Services as well as Hospitality, Retail and related services.
- Professionals make up the bulk of support services and include professionals and specialists drawn from the fields of Business and administration; Information, communication and technology; Legal, social and cultural fields; along with specialist advisors drawn from the Educational; Safety, Health & environment; Health and Science industries.
- Technicians and associated professionals also make up a significant portion of support services and include professionals and specialists drawn from the fields of Business and administration; Information, communication and technology; Legal, social and cultural fields; along with specialist advisors drawn from the Science, Engineering and Health industries.
- Clerical support staff are predominantly found in support services and are spread across general, customer, numerical and record keeping services.
- Service and sales staff are mainly found in support services and include personal, sales and protective services staff.
- Skilled craft and related trades staff form part of support services and include handicraft, electrical and electronics fields.
- Plant and machine operators form part of support services and include actual machine & plant operators as well as drivers.
- Elementary occupations are also found in support services and include domestic & commercial cleaners and helpers; caretakers and refuse workers (Data provided by PSETA).

3. Recent Related Studies

A study of HRD practices among all legislative institutions (Tsukudu Associates, undated) reported the following findings:

- All institutions have a vision, mission and values, which are well displayed though not internalised by employees.
- The culture of strategic planning is well entrenched at senior management level but not well communicated to the rest of the organisation.
- Heightened awareness that current initiatives are not tailor made to the sector, except for inter-institutional exchange visits.
- The HRD function in the sector is not strategic in action, location and influence resulting in very little credibility.
- HRD interventions are externally driven and implementation is mainly ad-hoc and reactive.
- Poor alignment with strategic objectives of each institution and other HRM processes such as Performance Management Career Management, Succession Planning and Promotions.
- People development lies at the heart of every manager's responsibility. Yet in the sector, management behaviour does not indicate an appreciation of HRD as a contributor to enhancing institutional performance.
- People development is still regarded as HR's responsibility and managerial performance is not yet evaluated on their people development efforts.
- Institutional investment is still largely limited to compliance with legislation and not driven by a comprehensive HRD plan.
- What is considered the HRD plan is the workplace skills plan (WSP) derived mainly from the 'wish lists' of individuals and not well considered institutional and business unit needs and integrated with personal development plans (PDPs) of employees.
- HRD practitioners have a poor understanding of the core business of the sector, and neither do they keep pace with developments in their professions.

The Tsukudu and Associates study made the following recommendations:

- Make optimal use of the skills levy
- Strengthen the effectiveness of the Training Committees to conduct quality assurance of the HRD planning and implementation processes, and to play an auditing and oversight role.
- Increase the capacity and capability of the HRD function.
- Raise awareness of senior management to see that learning and development is their responsibility, and that they are the drivers of building a learning and performing culture.

Sorour's 2013 study of the South African legislative sector showed that there was a difference of as much as 80% in pay levels for the same job level/grade. He recommended a "harmonisation solution" requiring the development of a new pay scale aligned with market practice and providing the 'best fit' across pay scales currently being applied.

Further findings relating to job analysis and job descriptions included the following:

- The need for fair and consistent remuneration practices at the point of harmonisation which in turn will require the correct evaluation of jobs across the legislatures; and
- Rationalising the different job description templates.

Moreover, the harmonisation project would require the re-evaluation of all jobs to ensure consistency and alignment across the legislatures and provide the foundation for a new grade and pay structure.

It was also recommended that a new job evaluation methodology be introduced so that where there are differences/changes in grades at the point of harmonisation, employees do not have a reference point to their current grade.

4. Interviews with HRD Personnel in Parliament and the Provincial Legislatures

Formal interviews were conducted with HRD personnel in Parliament and the Western Cape Legislature. In addition, a questionnaire was administered to HRD personnel from the other provincial legislatures in a workshop convened in East London by the Manager of Capacity Building in Parliament.

4.1 Parliament

According to the Skills Planning Manager in Parliament, the key skills deficits were in the following areas:

- Legal skills for Committee support;
- Financial management skills; and
- Research support for Parliamentary Committees.

The training priorities were identified as follows:

- Internal Auditing especially with a view to ensuring a better understanding of the work of the Auditor-General;
- Management and Leadership Skills;
- Legal skills – including research skills, and legal content advice
- Basic Understanding of the Public Financial Management Act (PFMA) and the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA).

In terms of available funding, limited funding was provided by Parliament in the form of bursaries for university study. No PSETA-funded skills development programmes were currently in place.

4.2 Western Cape Legislature

The need for technical training linked to skills requirements was stressed, particularly in the following areas: Legislative Processes; Information Technology; and Finance (especially relating to GRAPP).

The legislature is currently investing about R400 000 in short-course training (the mandated 1% of its budget). In addition, some funding is provided for study towards formal qualifications – degrees, diplomas, certificates.

The legislature's training priorities were identified as follows:

- Automation – IT skills to develop and implement automation processes;
- Technical, on-the-job skills in financial management, research to support committees; and
- Developing training materials.

It was suggested that certificate courses (3 months), especially on-line courses, were needed to address the skills challenges in the legislature.

4.3 Other Provincial Legislatures (and Parliament)

At a workshop hosted by Parliament's Capacity Building Manager, A questionnaire was administered to the participants who were HRD managers in the provincial legislatures.

The questionnaire is attached as an Appendix. It was completed by personnel from the following provinces: Eastern Cape (3); Free State; Limpopo (2); KwaZulu-Natal (2); Mpumalanga (2); Northern Cape (2); and North West. In addition, two questionnaires were completed by personnel from Parliament.

The responses are summarised below.

Question 1: What are the most critical skills shortages in your legislature?

In total, the following were considered to be equally important: management and leadership skills; IT; Financial Management and legal skills.

Other skills deficits that were recognised included the following: project management; government communications; wellness; monitoring and evaluation; parliamentary proceedings; human resources management; corporate governance; legislative drafting;

Question 2: Strategies to address skills shortages

These strategies included the following in order of importance: bursaries/scholarships; external training programmes; and internal training programmes

Question 3: Nature of internal training programmes

These included: personnel administration; office management; Monitoring and Evaluation; Leadership and oversight; Bid committees; supply chain management; minute taking; report writing; internal policy and procedures; customer service; diversity management; basic computing.

Question 4: Short-courses that could be provided by outside agencies

These included the following: project management; leadership strategy; policy development; risk management; health and safety; change management; organisation design and development; report writing; monitoring and evaluation; business analysis; strategic planning; financial management; supply chain management; conflict management; risk management.

Question 5: Courses for which scholarships/bursaries are provided

Business and commerce; Public administration; IT; financial management; Legal studies; Human resources management; public management.

Question 6: Other comments on HRD and Skills Development Needs

Limited budgets for HRD; lack of senior HRD leadership; lack of internal training capacity; skills development needs of lower-level employees are often ignored; skills development not a priority;

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

There appears to be widespread consensus across the HRD management personnel in the various legislatures about the challenges regarding capacity building and addressing current skills deficits.

First, there appears to be widespread agreement about the nature of the skills shortages. These relate broadly to management and leadership; financial management; information technology; legal skills; and research.

Second, there is consensus about inadequate budgets for training. However, it is not clear whether there are inadequate funds and/or inefficient utilization of available funding. The following table shows the expenditure on training in Parliament and seven provincial legislatures in 2015.

Table 1: Expenditure on Training in Parliament and Provincial Legislatures, 2015

Legislature	Expenditure (R, m)
North West	2.78
Eastern Cape	333.29
Western Cape	0.69
Gauteng	3.84
Free State	0.77
Mpumalanga	1.78
KwaZulu-Natal	1.26
Parliament	5.09

Source: PSETA

The figures in Table 1 show expenditure on all forms of training including internal and external short-courses, as well as bursaries/scholarships for formal education. In addition, the Eastern Cape figure includes training for Members of the Provincial Legislature, which accounts for the bulk of the R333 million.

Nevertheless, there appears to be a wide discrepancy in the funding available for training across the legislatures; consider for example, that Gauteng spends three times as much as KZN, a province of similar proportions, or that Gauteng's expenditure is five times that of the Western Cape.

What is evident from the interviews and questionnaire information is that a substantial amount of education and training is taking place at various levels (internal short courses; external short courses; and formal university education and training directed towards certificates, diplomas and degrees). What is not clear however, is whether this is training purely for certification or whether the additional skills are actually enhancing the productivity of staff in the legislatures. In this regard, it seems appropriate to undertake an evaluation exercise to determine the relationship between investment in training and the associated outputs and outcomes.

Recommendation 1: Put in place strategies to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of current investment in training of legislature personnel.

It is clear from the data collected that various forms of training are taking place. It is not clear which of the short course training programmes are effective, if any. There needs to be a more coordinated strategy within the legislatures to determine how the available resources could be used most effectively in enhancing the skills of employees. For example, there is little evidence that supports the view that 2-3 day courses are useful except in developing the most basic skills (e.g. Excel, and other computer programmes).

Consideration should therefore be given to prioritizing expenditure on longer-term programmes to develop both general and specific skills of legislature personnel. These could take various forms. It is critically important that discussions take place between the National School of Government and the legislatures on the nature, content, and length of such courses, as well as the type of certification that accompanies them.

For example, given the identified critical skills shortages in areas such as IT, Financial Management, Legal Skills, and Research, it may well be appropriate for the National School of Government to design, in consultation with the universities, a Certificate or Diploma for Legislature Personnel in some or all of these areas, or develop specific modules that could assist personnel acquire the skills they lack to undertake their designated functions more effectively.

Consideration needs to be given also to determining the most effective modes of delivery of programmes. In this regard, consideration must be given to the development of on-line programmes given its proven cost-effectiveness.

Finally, given the identified lack of leadership and management skills, it seems appropriate that the bulk of bursary and scholarship funding should be targeted towards the development of appropriate public administration and public management skills. Again, in this regard, the National School of Government, should work with the legislatures, and appropriate universities to develop relevant diploma and degree programmes. In this regard, much can be learned from the 'Governance and Leadership' programmes that have been developed for Members of Parliament and the Provincial Legislatures.

Recommendation 2: Identify appropriate short-courses and degree programmes to address the range of skills deficits identified amongst support personnel in Parliament and the provincial legislatures.

At a high level, there needs to be conceptual shift with respect to capacitation amongst support staff in the legislative sector linked to the fundamental difference between change and transformation. To change is to exchange one thing for another. To transform however, is to effect a metamorphosis in form or structure, a transition in the very nature or condition of a thing, a radical change in outward form or inner character. The breadth and depth of such sequential and systematic step leads to transformation and can only be achieved by transformational leadership styles. Linked to the psycho-socio-political role of the legislative sector, a transformational systemic evolution will require changes that are both quantitative and qualitative.

Finally, perhaps the most critical factor that needs to be addressed in strengthening capacity of support staff in the legislatures is linked to the actual "Political will" to effect such progressive changes:

"The point about political will on the part of members is often neglected, not least in my experience in debates about strengthening legislatures. I am familiar with those who wish to reform a legislature coming up with intricate schemes for structural and procedural change without ever explaining how such changes are to be achieved.

This is especially the case in those legislatures where the executive is dominant and is the body that reformers look to for the purpose of achieving change; change that is designed to subject that very same executive to more sustained challenge or questioning.

This leads to my second point about political will, namely that there needs to be some acceptance on the part of the executive that a strengthened legislature is not a fundamental challenge to its ability to govern, but rather an essential means of underpinning and enhancing its own legitimacy - government benefits from a legislature that is able to question and challenge its policies and require it to justify its actions and respond to citizens' concerns. If a legislature is seen to be doing what citizens expect of it – which, as I say, may differ from system to system – then this is likely to help generate diffuse support for the legislature and for the political system.

In sum, enhancing capacity building may embrace an educative task in relation to members of the executive as much as members of the legislature” (Paruk, 2011).

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APPENDIX



HRD AND SKILLS IN PARLIAMENT AND THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES

Name:

Position:

Legislature (Parliament, EC, KZN, etc):

1. Please rank in order of importance/priority what you regard as “critical skills” shortages in your legislature (rank from 1 to 5, with 1 for ‘most critical’ and 5 for ‘least critical’)

- (a) Legal Skills
- (b) Financial Management
- (c) IT
- (d) Research
- (e) Management and Leadership
- (f) Other (list them and rank importance, 1, 2, etc.)

2. What strategies do you have in place to address these skills shortages (tick the relevant box/boxes)?

- (a) Internal training programmes
- (b) External training programmes
- (c) Bursaries/Scholarships for formal education
- (d) Other (specify)

3. What training programmes, if any, do you offer internally?

4. Are there specific, short-course training programmes that you have identified, that could be provided by outside agencies, such as the SETAs?

5. For which degree/diploma/certificate programmes do you provide scholarships/bursaries?

6. Any other comments you may have on HRD and Skills Development Needs in your legislature?

Thank you