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HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICE

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SUMMARY@

1. The development of human resources is one of the key policy programmes of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Human Resource Development (HRD) is essential for the effective transformation of South African society.
2. HRD Strategies for workers must be guided by another key policy programme of the RDP - that of building the economy. The development of skills through training is fundamental to higher employment, the introduction of more advanced technologies, reduced inequalities, and improved productivity.
3. A HRD strategy consistent with the policy framework of the RDP must have as its long-term objective the development of skills amongst all South Africans. Skills development, however, cannot occur in a vacuum. HRD strategies must encourage alternative and appropriate forms of work organisation. These forms of work organisation must recognise and reward workers for the skills they have or able to develop. Recognition must occur through appropriate grading and salary structuring systems.
4. Current strategies on HRD for public service workers is disjointed and lacks an overall vision. Changes to wages and grading through collective bargaining is isolated from the development of public policy by departments and Provinces. These initiatives are further separated from initiatives on HRD by the RDP Ministry, the Public Service Commission, Provincial Service Commissions, the Finance Ministry and some national departments.
5. Occupational differentiation is the basis for existing grading and salary structuring systems in the public service. But occupational differentiation was primarily designed to meet the needs of workers in skilled occupations. The system was simply extended to include workers in occupations classified as unskilled or semi-skilled. The occupational differentiation system is inappropriate for a HRD strategy based on the RDP.
6. A skills-based grading system offers an important opportunity to assist in the effective development of workers located in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations.
7. The development, implementation and monitoring of an HRD strategy must occur with the full participation of public service workers. Furthermore, the HRD strategy must acknowledge the multitude of functions performed by public servants. These considerations would require changes to current collective bargaining arrangements.
8. It is suggested that a single Public Service Bargaining Council (PSBC) be established by the new Labour Relations Act (LRA). This Council should consist of a Central Chamber as well as Chambers for each of the major functions (Sectoral Chambers). Finally, appropriate structures may need to be established at the institution and workplace level. In this model there will be no need for Provincial and departmental Chambers. Where appropriate, departments and Provinces must be represented on the Sectoral Chambers.
9. Four Sectoral Chambers are suggested. These are health, education, the civil service, and police and security. The number and demarcation of Sectoral Chambers would need to be negotiated between employer and employee organisations in the Public Service Bargaining Council (PSBC) and the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC).
10. Effective HRD will require administrative and institutional reforms. These include defining an appropriate role for a Department of Administration and changes to legislation, including subsidiary legislation and regulations like the Public Service Staff Code.

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CONTENTS

SECTION 1
INTRODUCTION 3

SECTION 2
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (HRD) AND THE RDP 3
HRD IN THE WORKPLACE - A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK 4

SECTION 3
INITIATIVES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE THAT IMPACT ON HRD 5

SECTION 4
GRADING AND SALARY STRUCTURING SYSTEMS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICE 6
Occupational Differentiation Approach to Public Service Remuneration 6
Description of the Occupational Differentiation System 7
Re-classification of General Assistants 7
Occupational Differentiation as a Basis for Personnel Administration 8
GRADING AND SALARY STRUCTURING IN PRACTICE 8
Degree of Differentiation into Occupational Classes 8
Impact on Unskilled Workers in the Public Service 8
Reclassification of General Assistants 9
Occupational Families and the Impact on General Assistants 10
Impact of Personnel Administration Standards (PAS) 10
Grading, Wages and General Assistants 11
Occupational Differentiation in a Nutshell ... 12

SECTION 5
A POSSIBLE WAY FORWARD 13
Framework on Human Resource Development 13
Alternate Approach to Grading and Wages 13
Collective Bargaining Arrangements 13
Administrative and Institutional Arrangement 14

SECTION 6
A SHORT CASE STUDY - HEALTH 15

REFERENCES 17

APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1
Occupational Families in the Public Service 18
APPENDIX 2
Re-classification of General Assistants 19
APPENDIX 3
Elements of a Personal Administration Standard (PAS) 20
APPENDIX 4
Income Ranges of the Different Occupational Families 21

SECTION 1

Introduction

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was developed by the African National Congress (ANC) prior to entering government. The RDP was developed as an integrated and coherent socio-economic policy framework aimed at transforming South African society. Within this framework the ANC, as the majority party in the Government of National Unity (GNU), undertook to develop detailed policy positions and a legislative programme.

The transformation agenda - with an analysis of the problem areas and the solutions to these problems - is captured in five inter-related policy programmes. These are:

- meeting basic needs;
- developing human resources;
- building the economy;
- democratising the state and society; and
- implementing the RDP.

Translating the policy framework of the RDP into legislative, budgetary, and institutional changes is rapidly unfolding. This report attempts to contribute to this process by looking at Human Resource Development (HRD) for workers in the public service[1].

The aim of the report will be achieved by:

- reviewing the HRD challenges as captured in the RDP;
- identifying those factors (including grading and wages) that impact on HRD for the South African Public Service;
- identifying current initiatives that will influence the development of a HRD policy framework and strategy (using the factors identified as a reference); and
- describing and evaluating current grading and salary structuring arrangements in the public service.

On the basis of these observations and conclusions, the report will:

- provide a policy option to facilitate a more effective process of HRD in the public service; and
- illustrate the observations and options by looking at health as a case study

SECTION 2

Human Resource Development (HRD) and the RDP

Human Resource Development (HRD) is central to the success of the RDP because:

> *Human resources, unlike other resources, think for themselves! People are, and must remain, the architects of the RDP as it unfolds in the years to come. The provision of opportunities for people to develop themselves in order to improve the quality of their own lives and the standard of living of their communities is a central objective of the RDP, alongside ensuring that basic needs are met, the society is democratised and the economy grows.*
>
> *(ANC, RDP base document, Clause 3.2.1, page 59).*

To meet the HRD challenge, several measures are recommended in the RDP base document. These include:

- a revision of the education system;
- changes to training;
- an integrated qualifications framework linking education and training;
- the development of arts, culture, sports, and recreation; and
- youth development.

These measures form the core for a society-wide programme of developing human resources. However, they do not adequately capture the HRD challenges for workers. HRD for workers must be considered within the context of another of the key policy programmes of the RDP, that of building the economy.

HRD for workers is recognised as an essential pre-requisite for the creation of a strong, dynamic, and modern economy. The RDP base document makes the following observation:

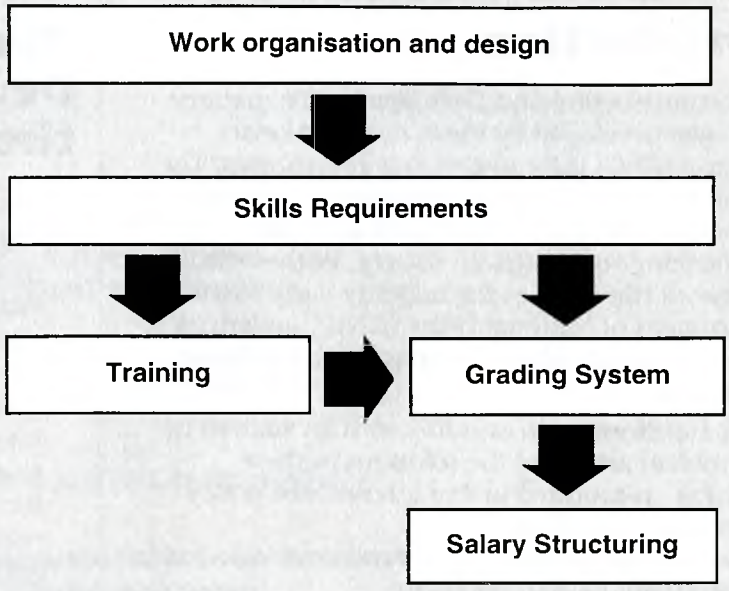
> *A critical cause of inefficiency and inequality lies in the position of labour. Economic growth depended on the centrality of the cheap labour system. Rigid hierarchies and oppressive labour relations ignored the skills latent in our experienced industrial workforce[2]. Apartheid laws denied workers their basic rights. High levels of unemployment and oppressive legislation made it difficult even for organised workers to maintain a living wage. The lack of skills forms a major obstacle to the development of a modern economy able to support a decent living standard for all our people.*
>
> *(ANC, RDP base document, Clause 4.1.7, page 77).*

Thus, the development of skills through training is fundamental to higher employment, the introduction of more advanced technologies, and reduced inequalities. For the public service, it is a crucial component of improved service delivery.

As policy maker, the Government of National Unity (GNU), has made some progress on HRD. Significant initiatives include the establishment of a Directorate for Human Resource Development in the RDP Ministry. The Directorate is finalising policy positions and implementation strategies for the second draft of the RDP White Paper. In addition, a White Paper on education and training was published in March 1995 by the Ministry of Education. One of the most significant proposals in the White Paper which will impact on HRD for workers, is the creation of an integrated qualifications system.

But the State is not only a policy-maker. With close to 1.2 million workers in the public service alone, it is also the most significant employer. Current government strategies on HRD are disjointed and lack an overall vision. This is mainly due to the separation of HRD from its component issues of skills requirements, grading, wages, training and work organisation.

FIGURE 1: Relationship between Work Organisation, Skills, Grading & Wages



HRD in the Workplace – a Conceptual Framework

To correctly identify and review current initiatives that impact on HRD, it is necessary to understand the relationship between skills, work organisation, grading, and wages.

HRD strategies are about the development of appropriate skills. Future HRD policies and strategies must be shaped around current realities on the distribution of skills. Past training and skills development strategies led to the creation of a segmented labour market. Segmentation was characterised by a recognition of skills in higher echelons. Recognition was coupled with structured training programmes to obtain these skills. In the lower echelons, there was a failure to recognise skills that were exercised and a deliberate fragmentation of jobs into tasks. Tasks that require no skills or low skills levels.

Thus, current forms of work organisation in both the public and private sectors are a result of a segmented labour market. Existing workplace organisation is based on the system of "scientific management" which attempt to divide work into a number of simple tasks that require no or little skills. In many cases, this form of work organisation requires excessive levels of supervision. Existing grading systems in South Africa are designed around these forms of work organisation and lock the majority of workers into low-paying and narrow task-based job descriptions.

The consequences of this can be illustrated by looking at wage patterns in the public service. The first is the large number of workers earning wages well below the living wage level[3]. For example, more than 35% of workers in the public service earn below R1 500 a month[4]. A second consequence is the large differences in wages between different types of workers. For example, a *Director-General* earns 25 times the salary of a *Cleaner* in the public service[5].

A minority of South Africans, mainly white males, are located in the high skill segment of the labour market and have access to high wages and structured training. However, the majority of workers are found in the low skill segment of the labour market. Most black people, especially black women, can be found in this segment. This segment is characterised by no training and low wages.

Reconstruction and development within the RDP policy framework will require a HRD strategy which has as its long-term objective the development of skills amongst all South Africans. However, skills development cannot occur in a vacuum. HRD strategies must encourage alternative and appropriate forms of work organisation. These forms of work organisation must recognise the skills that workers have or able to develop. Recognition will need to occur through appropriate grading and salary structuring systems. Future wage levels must bear testimony to the effectiveness of current HRD strategies.

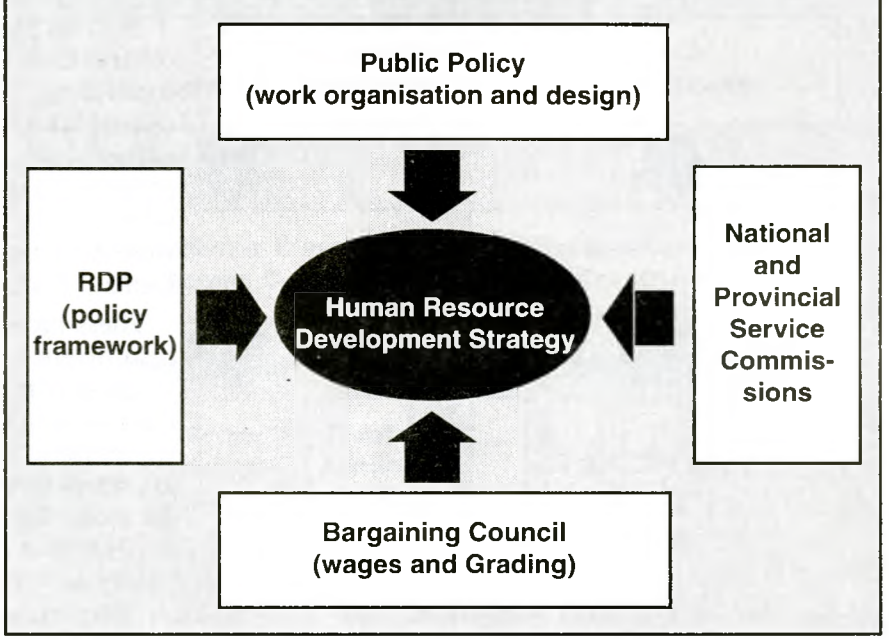
SECTION 3

Initiatives in the Public Service that Impact on HRD

Based on the conceptual framework outlined above, four sources of policy proposals can be isolated that impact on HRD for the public service (see Figure 2). These are:

- **the collective bargaining process.** A need to review salaries and grading in the Public Service has emerged from the collective bargaining process. The bargaining units include the Central Chamber of the Public Service Bargaining Council and the Education Labour Relations Council. Furthermore, a similar need has been expressed in discussions between the Ministry of Safety and Security and police unions[6] (see Figure 5).
  These initiatives have focused attention on the minimum living wage, low wage levels amongst the majority of public service workers, as well as high wage differentials between different groups of workers. To address the various wage-related issues, grading and training policies have been correctly identified as areas that require revision. However, revisions to grading and wages is occurring in isolation from the need to transform current work organisation practices.
- **the development of public policy at the central, Provincial, and local levels**. For example, the development of alternative policies, within the RDP framework, on health, education, policing, water, agriculture, etc. These policies will impact on the number of personnel required as well as the skills required from these personnel. In some cases, entirely new categories of workers may be required.
  Policing can be used to illustrate the above. The Ministry for Safety and Security is committed to a demilitarised police service. This occurs as part of a commitment to community policing. These changes will require a radical restructuring in the functioning of the South African Police Services. Greater attention will need to be given to "people's skills" such as counselling, educating, and listening. In addition, police services may need to be structured in entirely different ways. Police personnel may need to visit schools and communities. These changes will impact on the types of personnel required, their training and skills requirements. These changes will need to be reflected in the grading and value of different types of jobs in the Police Services.
- **the policy positions outlined in the Draft RDP White Paper**. The White Paper on the RDP aims to translate the policy framework of the RDP base document into an actual programme of the government (RDP Draft White Paper, 1994, page 2). The first draft of the White Paper commits government to the restructuring of the national, Provincial, and, local government as the primary means to finance the RDP.
  Specific measures that are suggested for the process of restructuring includes the rationalisation of grading structures to a simple, broad-banded structure based on competency rather than qualification. Grading must allow for clear career paths and lifetime learning (RDP Draft White Paper, 1994, page 40). However, the White Paper does not give any guidance on the introduction of these measures within the current collective bargaining and policy formulation frameworks in operation in the public service.
- **finally, direct initiatives on HRD**. These refer mainly to initiatives by the Public Service Commission (PSC), the newly constituted Provincial Service Commissions and some National Departments. The PSC and some of the larger national departments, like health, have played a greater role in the development of HRD policies and strategies as compared to many of the small departments and Provinces. At the time of writing, Provincial Service Commissions have not been established long enough to have developed policy proposals, strategies, and policy measures on HRD. However, a Commissioner of a Provincial Service Commission indicated their intention to develop a policy framework on HRD[7].
  Initiatives by the PSC and national departments are not guided by the broad HRD challenges outlined earlier in this report[8]. For example, HRD

FIGURE 2: Sources of Policy Proposals that impact on HRD



strategies of the PSC revolve entirely around the role of the Public Service Training Institute (PSTI). The PSTI is being developed as an umbrella in-house training centre for public service personnel providing all supervisory, managerial, and executive staff on the different levels of the public service with equal access to quality training opportunities (Vil-Nkomo, 1994, page 7).
The current mission of the PSTI does not address HRD for the majority of public servants. Departments and Provinces are meant to be responsible for line function training. However, training is expected to happen in the absence of an over-riding HRD framework, which was meant to be provided by the PSC.

From the description of the sources of policy proposals on HRD, the following two observations can be made:

1. **HRD is disjointed in the public service.** There exists little or no co-ordination between HRD processes, of developing public policy, and reviewing wages and grading.
2. Specific HRD initiatives are developed in isolation from socio-economic realities in South Africa. That is, it **lacks an overall framework.** HRD initiatives do not acknowledge the existence of a segmented labour market. Thus, HRD measures do not make provision for the development of skills for all workers.

SECTION 4

Grading and Salary Structuring Systems in the South African Public Service

This section of the report will look specifically at grading and wages as components of an overall HRD strategy. The logical starting point in reviewing wages and grading in the public service is the current remuneration policy. It is this policy that has given rise to a system of occupational differentiation as the basis for the management of personnel in the public service.

Occupational Differentiation Approach to Public Service Remuneration

The remuneration policy for the public service is aimed at:

> *enabling the State as employer, within the confines of affordability, to recruit and retain sufficient personnel of the desired quality in the open labour market for the execution of state functions in a satisfactory manner. It is also aimed at a satisfied personnel corps and the maintenance of labour peace*
>
> *(Public Service Staff Code, Chapter K.I, Part 1, page 1).*

To achieve this policy objective, the PSC accepted the principle of occupational differentiation in 1979. This was confirmed by a government decision in January 1982[9]. Occupational differentiation is the process of classifying serving personnel into a number of occupational classes on the basis of distinctive fields of work. Currently, the 1.2 million workers employed in the public services are classified into 334 occupational classes. At the start of the process of occupational differentiation, more than 650 occupational classes were identified.

Reasons for adopting the occupational differentiation approach can be found in salary structuring. The salaries of all workers employed in central state departments and Provincial administrations were fixed by the PSC, as the central personnel agency. Initially posts in the Public Service were broadly classified into six broad Sections. These were Administrative, Clerical, Professional, Technical, General A and General B[10].

These broad classifications were found to be insufficient for determining the salaries and other working conditions of the multitude of personnel employed in the public service. The diversity and specialisation of occupations could not be accommodated in the classification of personnel into six broad Sections. The nature of the problems encountered included the following:

- *The salaries offered to personnel in the different categories were not market-related which resulted*

in a situation where the recruitment as well as the retention of suitable personnel were almost impossible;

- *The systems did not grant adequate recognition for personnel who performed above-average work;*
- *The rates of remuneration were such that personnel did not aspire to higher posts with more responsibilities; and,*
- *Salary adjustments were implemented per broad category which made it difficult to utilise remedial measures in order to rectify problems that might have been experienced by a specific personnel group in the specific category.*[11]

A careful reading of the above problems reveal a clear bias towards workers with recognised skills in the public service. The development of the occupational differentiation system was therefore geared towards the needs of skilled labour.

Description of the Occupational Differentiation System

Occupational Classes lie at the heart of the system of occupational differentiation. This has resulted in a popular misconception about grades, Occupational Classes, and salary notches. There is a popular misconception that the public service has 334 grades or salary notches. On this understanding, it is often recommended that the number of Occupational Classes need to be reduced.

Grading systems are only applied in Occupational Classes. Each of the 334 Occupational Classes is divided into grades known as Post Classes. Post Classes establish progression measures (career and financial) within a particular occupation. In many cases, Post Classes also establish work hierarchies. These hierarchies form the basis of responsibility and accountability arrangements. However, for particular workers, accountability may also be across Occupational Classes. For example, a *Cleaner* at a hospital may be accountable to a *Cleaner Post Class 2* in addition to the *Nursing Services Manager*. The number of Post Classes differ between Occupational Classes.

On the basis of occupational differentiation, salaries for public service workers are structured on a key salary scale[12]. Each Post Class corresponds to one notch (fixed salary) or more than one notch (salary scale) on the key salary scale. The combined salary notches for all Post Classes within an Occupational Class is known as the salary scale for the Occupational Class.

In 1991, the PSC's precursor adopted a revised remuneration strategy aimed at the rationalisation of service dispensations. This strategy was aimed at:

... shifting the focus of service dispensation improvements from individual occupational classes to occupational families. In order to establish the revised strategy, a rationalisation project was undertaken with (the following) as objectives:

- *the reduction of the number of salary scales and occupational classes,*
- *the grouping of occupational classes in occupational families and the establishing of core salary structures for each occupational family or sub-family,*
- *the elimination of salary structure disparities between related occupational classes and occupational families, and*
- *the standardisation and simplification of personnel administration measures.*

(CFA, 1991, page 13)

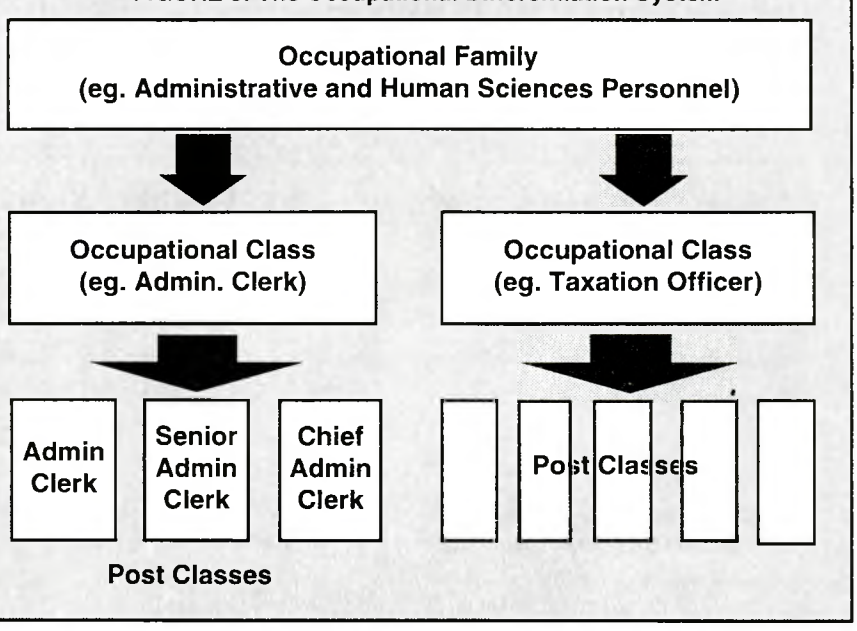
The development of Occupational Families has assisted in establishing common (or core) service dispensations for related Occupational Classes. Appendix 1 contains a complete list of the current occupational families and the number of personnel in each of these families.

Re-classification of General Assistants

Of specific relevance to this report is the position of occupations that ostensibly require no skills or have low skills levels. Until 1993, the second largest Occupational Class was that of *General Assistants*. But pressure from the workforce forced the PSC to address the position of *General Assistants*. It was found that *General Assistants* were performing a large variety of tasks, sometimes performing tasks that were the responsibility of occupational classes at higher skill and wage levels, e.g. *General Assistant* performing the duties of a *Driver*.

As a result of an agreement with recognised employee organisations at the time, personnel in this Class were re-classified into 13 other Occupational Classes[13]. Of the 13 Occupational Classes, only one was an existing Class, that of *Messenger* (see Appendix

FIGURE 3: The Occupational Differentiation System



2). In addition, those *General Assistants* that were performing the work of an Occupational Class at a higher wage level were re-classified into that Class. For example, a *General Assistant* responsible for driving duties was re-classified as a *Driver*.

Occupational Differentiation as a basis for Personnel Administration

Until now, occupational differentiation has been discussed exclusively with reference to remuneration. The basis for occupational differentiation arose from the need to create a manageable way of structuring salaries. However, occupational differentiation has developed to be the basis for personnel administration. This is achieved through the personnel tool known as the Personnel Administration Standard (PAS). The PAS consists of 21 elements written into a single document. These elements represent the full spectrum of the service dispensation. Appendix 3 contains a list of the 21 elements in the PAS. Measures that are specific to that Occupational Class are the only ones that are detailed in the PAS. If no specific measures are detailed, then the user is referred to the general measures. The general measures are contained in the Public Service Staff Code (PSSC), the Public Service Act (PSA) and Regulations.

Grading and Salary Structuring in Practice

The introduction of the occupational differentiation system has played a significant role in the working lives of public servants. This part of the report will briefly evaluate the impact of the system of occupational differentiation on different Occupational Classes in the public service. Special attention will be paid to the position of workers in unskilled occupations, the most significant being that of *General Assistant*.

Degree of differentiation into occupational classes

Table 1 shows the variation in the numbers of workers in the various Occupational Classes (expressed in terms of a range) in September 1993, before the reclassification of *General Assistants*. The degree of differentiation between the different Occupational Classes differed substantially. Less than 1% of workers occupied more than 55% of the Occupational Classes. On the other hand almost half of the workers occupied only two of the Occupational Classes. Approximately 81% of workers are classified into the ten biggest Occupational Classes. Represented in another way, the total number of workers in the 300 smallest occupational classes is less than the total number of workers classified as *General Assistants*.

Impact on unskilled workers in the public service

Due to differences in the numbers of different types of workers required by the public service, variation in the size of Occupational Classes is expected. However, the extreme variation between Occupational Classes in the public service is unwarranted and has major implications for wages, training, and working conditions.

Firstly, regular structural adjustments to the salary scale of individual Occupational Classes may be required to ensure adequate and comparable salary levels with the market and other Occupational Classes. However, the larger the Occupational Class the greater the cost of a structural adjustment. With severe limitations on the government fiscus, this places serious limitations on salary adjustments for large Occupational Classes.

Secondly, and more importantly, occupational differentiation forms the basis of personnel administration. Therefore, issues such as training,

Table 1: Distribution of Workers across Occupational Classes

Occupational Class Size Range	Number of people	Number of classes	% of people	% of of classes
Between 1 and 10 workers	278	62	0.03	19.69
Between 11 and 100 workers	5 099	116	0.53	36.25
Between 101 and 1000 workers	29 471	88	3.05	27.50
Between 1 001 and 10 000 workers	141 938	43	14.70	13.44
Between 10 001 and 100 000 workers	299 259	8	31.00	2.50
Over 100 000 workers	489 197	2	50.68	0.63
	965 243	**319**	**100.00**	**100.00**

Notes: Figures exclude workers from the TBVC and the 1 408 people who are classified under the unknown Occupational Class (i.e. their rank not in an existing PAS). However, the table does include Educators.

Source: Office of the PSC

Table 2: Occupational Classes Employing more than 10 000 People

Occupational Class	Number of workers	% of workforce
Provisioning Administration Clerk	12 030	1.25
Staff Nurse	20 958	2.17
Disciplinary Personnel: Dept. of Correctional Services	23 091	2.39
Nursing Assistant	26 740.	2.77
Military Practitioner (SANDF)	29 256	3.03
3.03 Admin Clerk	46 681	4.84
Professional Nurse	48 727	5.05
Functional Personnel: (SAPS)	91 776	9.51
General Assistants	208 697	21.62
College and School related educator	280 500	29.06
	788 456	**81.68**

Notes: Personnel numbers were as at 30 September 1993.

Source: Office of the PSC

promotion, and career advancement opportunities are developed within the context of an Occupational Class. It is easier to develop these measures for small or well-defined groups of workers.

Table 2 lists those occupational classes that represent more than 10 000 workers. Of the above, *General Assistants* is the only Occupational Class that lack an occupational identity. That is, for the remaining nine classes, well-defined and national standards of training, skills levels, and competency exist. In this context it was easier for the PSC to develop grades, training opportunities, and advancement measures for members of all the large occupational classes except that of General Assistant.

Reclassification of General Assistants

The strategy to reclassify *General Assistants* had two components. The first was the reclassification of a *General Assistant* into an existing Occupational Class. This translated into a real change to the working conditions of that *General Assistant*, that is, higher wages and promotion possibilities. The second approach was the reclassification of a *General Assistant* into one of 12 newly created Occupational Classes. In this case the change was simply in title and not in working conditions.

From the figures available, only 15 percent of *General Assistant* enjoyed a change in their working conditions. The remaining 85 percent were simply given a new job title with no significant change in their working conditions. The 12 newly created classes were the same in every respect except for the "scope of applicability" and the "prescribed job contents" (de Bruyn, 1995, pages 12-28). It can be concluded that the re-classification process did not make a significant difference to the majority of

Table 3: Distribution of Personnel into Occupational Families

Occupational Family Size Range	Number of people	Number of families	% of people	% of families
Between 1 and 100 people	257	8	0.03	16
Between 101 and 1000 people	3 609	13	0.37	26
Between 1 001 and 5 000 people	31 659	13	3.29	26
Between 5 001 and 10 000 people	49 371	6	5.12	12
Between 10 001 and 100 000 people	182 564	6	18.95	12
Over 100 000 people	696 182	4	72.24	8
	963 642	**50**		

Notes: Figures are as at 30 April 1994. As such they exclude personnel from the former TBVC. School and College related educators are included in the figures. 12 134 people were not included because they were not assigned to a specific occupational class.

Source: Office of the PSC

General Assistants. The lack of any significant impact on the position of *General Assistants* is due to the process of reclassification occurring in the absence of an overall HRD strategy.

Occupational Families and the impact on General Assistants

The development of Occupational Families assisted in the creation of core salary structures and standard service dispensations. This helped to maintain equilibrium in salary levels and working conditions between workers performing comparable tasks with similar responsibilities and skills. It also helped in the administration of the salaries of public service workers.

The conclusion that the size of an Occupational Class (degree of differentiation) is crucial applies equally to Occupational Families. Table 3 provides a summary of the variation in the numbers of workers in the occupational families.

It was assumed that the reclassification of General Assistants into the 12 new Occupational Classes (listed in Appendix 2) would facilitate advancement for these workers. The most significant way that advancement was envisaged was by linking the new Occupational Classes to Families that allow for skills development and career advancement. An indicator that can be used to test for the provision for skills development and career advancement is the range of the core salary structure. That is, within the current system, the greater the salary range of an Occupational Family, the greater the potential for advancement.

Analysis of the core salary structure of the occupational families reveal five types of distributions (see Appendix 4). These are;

- low income occupational families (R10 800 – R21 894 per annum);
- low-middle income occupational families (R10 800 – R55 920 per annum);
- low-high income occupational families (R10 800 – R107 019 per annum);
- middle-high income occupational families (R21 89 – R121 563 per annum); and,
- high income occupational families (R126 411– R266 784 per annum).

Using these classifications, Table 4 summarises the number of Occupational Families and the numbers of workers in terms of each of these five types of salary distribution.

Approximately 84 percent (about 135 000 workers) of previously classified *General Assistants* are grouped into the Occupational Family *General Services Assistants*. Of the four low income occupational families, *General Services Assistants* account for 97 percent of workers.

Only 16 percent of *General Assistants* were moved into a low-high income Occupational Family. Approximately 10 percent (about 16 200 workers) are located in the Family *Household and Food Services Personnel*. The remaining 6 percent (approx. 9 200 workers) are located in the Family *Road Construction Personnel*. In theory, these workers have an increased potential for upward mobility. However, their chances of upward mobility is dependent on a number of other factors. The most important factor is the development of a holistic HRD strategy. Other factors include changes in the attitude of workers, availability of information about the possibilities of promotion, and revaluation of the work performed by *General Assistants* (de Bruyn, 1995, pages 7-9).

Impact of Personnel Administration Standards (PAS)

A brief comparison of PAS elements for a selection of Occupational Classes reveal significant reference to the general measures. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is the Public Service Staff Code (hereinafter

Table 4 - Distribution of Families as per Income Distribution

Type of Core Salary Scale Distribution	Number of people	Number of families	% of people	% of families
Low (R10 800 - R21 894)	163 498	4	16.76	8
Low to Middle (R10 800 - R55 920)	72 734	11	7.45	22
Low to High (R10 800 - R107 019)	394 993	13	40.48	26
Middle to High (R21 894 - R121 563))	309 238	11	31.69	22
Very High (R126 411 - R266 784)	2 258	1	0.23	2
Core Salary Structure not known	33 056	10	3.39	20
	963 642	**50**		

Notes: Figures are as at 30 April 1994. Figures include Educators but exclude personnel from the former TBVC. It also excludes 12 135 personnel that have not been allocated to a specific Occupational Class and thus have not been allocated to a specific Occupational Family.

Source: Office of the PSC

referred to as the Code), the Public Service Act and regulations that effectively govern personnel administration for the various Occupational Classes.

A detailed study of the Code reveals that its provisions are mainly geared towards the interest of skilled workers, especially personnel in the administrative and management streams. For example, the Code makes provision for study leave. However, these are entirely geared towards formal education. Quite clearly this does not meet the needs of workers in lower graded occupations, who may require Adult Basic Education (ABE) which is not covered by the existing procedures.

Of greater consequence to workers and to HRD is the authority and structure of the Code. The Code was developed when the Commission for Administration (CFA)[14] had the exclusive power to decide on personnel matters. Thus, the Code is structured to assist with the administration of rules and procedures developed centrally by the employer. It serves more as a management manual and does not capture effectively matters of mutual interest between workers and management.

The current Code is extremely voluminous (over 800 pages). It mixes policy positions with detailed administrative procedures. It is complex, has extensive cross-referencing, and is written in administrative and legal jargon. This makes it extremely difficult to identify and decipher the various provisions that impact on HRD. The inability to understand the current provisions hamper all efforts to develop alternatives.

Grading, Wages and General Assistants

The final issue to consider in relation to occupational differentiation is the impact of grading and wages on

Table 5: Comparing Salary Scales of Different Occupational Classes

Occupational Class	Number of workers	Min. Notch	Max. Notch	Number of Post Classes	Wage Differential (ratio of max. to min)
Administration Clerk	49 934	46 545	12 948	3	3.70
Administration Officer	6 893	107 019	27 138	5	3.94
Cleaner (ex-General Assistant)	42 945	12 381	10 800	2	1.15
Coxswain	6	25 884	13 515	2	1.92
Dietician	257	81 114	18 468	6	4.39
Functional Personnel: SAPS	95 540	107 019	10 800	12	9.91
General Foreman	5 793	33 408	11 814	4	2.83
Household Aid (ex-General Assistant)	5 692	12 381	10 800	2	1.15
Management Echelon	2 254	266 784	126 411	4(see note 1)	2.11
Medical Officer	6 956	103 185	27 138	6	3.80
Medical Technical Officer	141	64 980	14 649	5	4.44
Operator	3 099	21 894	11 307	2	1.94
Pioneer	1 259	21 894	11 307	6	1.94
Professional Nurse	48 996	107 019	11 814	8(see note 2)	9.06
Provisioning Admin Clerk	11 659	46 545	12 948	3	3.59
Security Officer	8 779	55 920	11 307	8	4.95
Telecom Operator	2 048	40 920	12 948	3	3.16
Trade Inspector	15	107 019	17 187	6	6.23
Typist	6 570	40 920	15 216	5	2.69
Veterinary Technician	61	64 980	14 649	5	4.44
Work Study Officer	488	107 019	16 530	5	6.47

Note: Personnel figures are as at 30 April 1994

1: Management Echelon refers to the positions of Director, Chief Director, Deputy Director-General, and Director General. These personnel are on fixed notches and their salaries are R126 411, R148 599, R183 432, and R266 784 respectively.

2: Included as a post class are student nurses whose salary range from R11 814 to R17 844. If student nurses are excluded the minimum is R24 630 with a ratio between the maximum and minimum being reduced to 4.35

Source: Office of the PSC

different Occupational Classes. Table 5 compares the number of Post Classes for a number of Occupational Classes. It also lists the maximum and minimum salary[15]. The minimum and maximum is used to calculate the wage differential for that Occupational Class.

An analysis of Post Class distributions of the above Occupational Classes reveal three patterns (see Figure 5). The first is a normal distribution over the post-class range. That is, workers are concentrated in the middle of the range with smaller numbers at the fringes. An example of this type of distribution is that of *Work Study Officer*. The second type of distribution is one where the majority are located at the higher end of the post-class range, for example, the occupational class *Veterinary Technician*. The final type of distribution is one in which the majority are located at the lower end of the post-class range, as is the case with *Cleaners*. The remainder of the ex-*General Assistant* Classes follow the Post-Class distribution of *Cleaners*.

Finally, an analysis of the salary distribution of Post Classes reveals the same three patterns outlined in Figure 4. Once again the salary distribution of ex-*General Assistants* reveals a tendency for the majority to be located in the lowest salary notch of the Post Class. Of interest to ex-*General Assistants* is the different salary patterns for Post Class 1 and Post Class 2. Workers in Post Class 1 are concentrated at the lowest notch. This is in total contrast to the salary distribution for Post Class 2 where the majority are concentrated at the highest salary notch (de Bruyn, 1995, page 4).

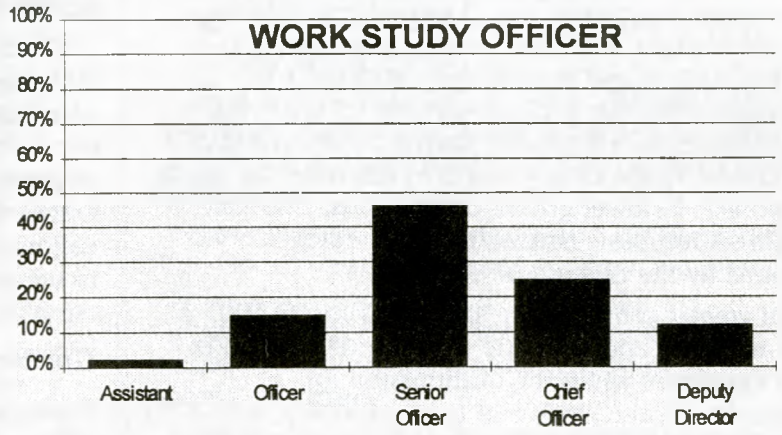
The Post-Class distribution and the salary distribution within a Post-Class provides evidence of the lack of effective HRD for workers in unskilled occupational classes.

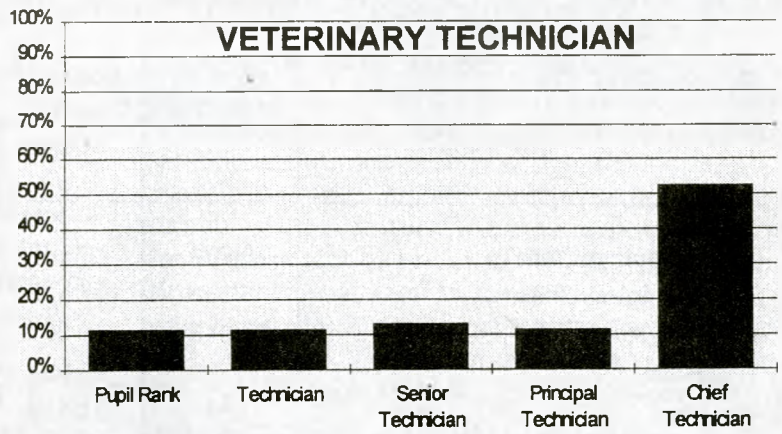
Occupational Differentiation in a Nutshell

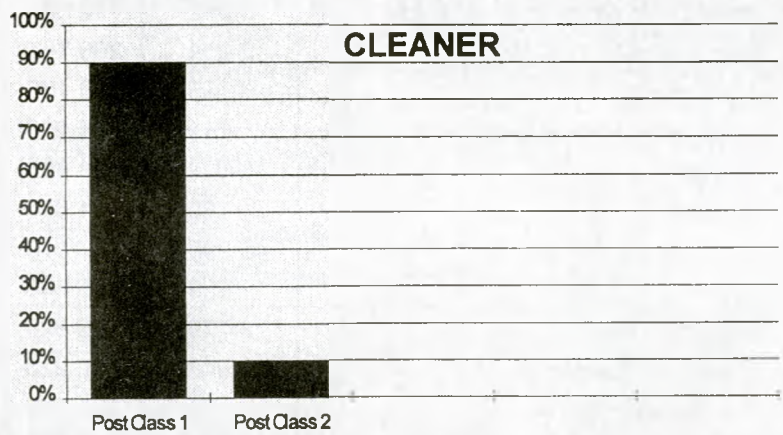
The occupational differentiation system - the cornerstone of grading, wages, and advancement in the public service - was designed to meet the needs of workers in skilled occupations. The system was simply extended to include unskilled and semi-skilled workers without considering the specific skills development needs of these workers. This resulted in low wages, a lack of advancement opportunities, upward mobility and a lack of job security amongst workers in unskilled occupations.

Reform and change to grading and salary structuring is accepted by the majority of stakeholders. This would imply changes to the system of occupational differentiation. However, clear positions do not exist on the content of these reform measures. The last section of this report suggest a policy option to assist in this regard.

FIGURE 4: Post Class (grades) distribution







NOTE: Y-axis represent percentage of workers while the X-axis represents the post class (as at 30 April 1994)

SECTION 5

A Possible Way Forward

The twin RDP objectives of developing human resources and of building the economy require an urgent focus on HRD for public service workers. The way forward is detailed in four sections. These are:

- Framework on Human Resource Development (HRD);
- Alternate Approach to Grading and Wages;
- Collective Bargaining Arrangements; and
- Administrative and Institutional Reforms

Framework on Human Resource Development

1. There is an urgent need to link the various HRD policy initiatives for public service workers. The various initiatives need to be guided by a common vision of HRD. One immediate way of achieving this is by the development of an HRD policy framework for the public service.
2. This policy framework must be consistent with the overall spirit of the RDP. The framework must take due cognisance of the segmentation of the labour market on the basis of skills. Thus, the policy framework would need to have as a core principle the development of skills amongst all public service workers. In particular, the policy framework needs to address the development of skills amongst workers that were denied (and who continue to be denied) access to structured training.
3. The policy framework must acknowledge the impact of work organisation, training, grading, and wages on HRD.

Alternative approach to Grading and Wages

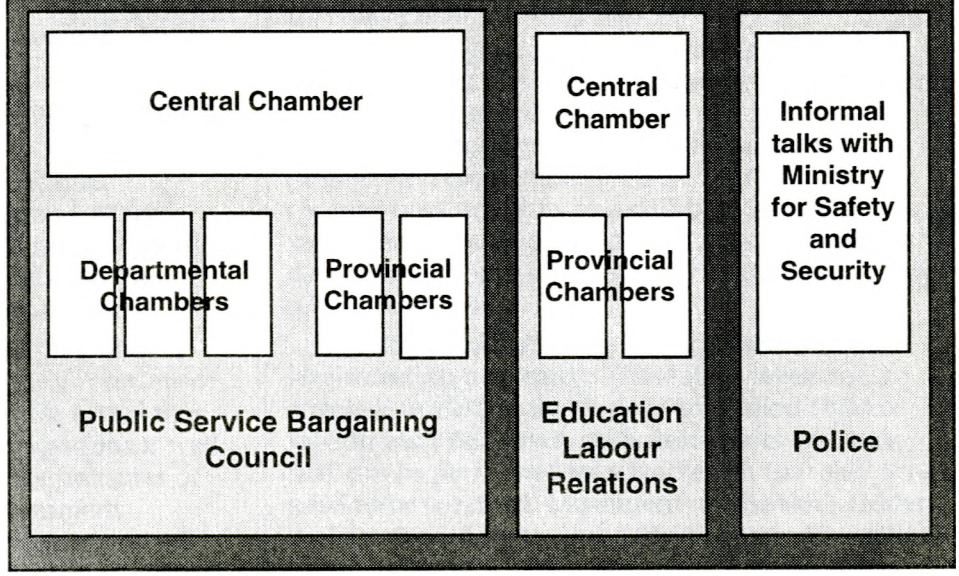
1. A move towards a skills-based grading system is supported. This would significantly assist the nature of HRD for workers in the unskilled and semi-skilled occupations.
2. The development of a skills-based grading system will require extensive changes to the way that workers have been differentiated in the public ervice. Workers should be differentiated into broad streams on the basis of function or services provided. The exact definition of the streams would need to be negotiated with employee organisations and consulted with Departments and Provinces. The four major streams that are initially being suggested are Health, Education, Police and Security Personnel, and the Civil Service.
3. Once appropriate streams have been agreed upon, current workers in the public service need to be assigned to these streams. Streams would form the backbone of the grading system. Within each stream, a number of appropriate skills levels (grades) will need to be identified. For example, *General Assistants* working in hospitals and other state health institutions are integrated with *Medical Officers, Professional Nurses*, and other medical staff into a health personnel stream. *General Assistants* would be at a lower skill level with *Medical Officers* at a higher skill level. The process of determining the streams, the staff that would be part of that stream, the skills level, as well as the pay relativities between the different skills levels must be negotiated with the appropriate staff associations and trade unions.

Collective Bargaining Arrangements

1. The Public Service Labour Relations Act (PSLRA) establishes a Public Service Bargaining Council (PSBC) with a Central Chamber and Chambers at the Provincial and department levels. In addition, the Education Labour Relations Act establishes a Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) with Central and Provincial Chambers. These collective bargaining arrangements are inappropriate for effective introduction of HRD.

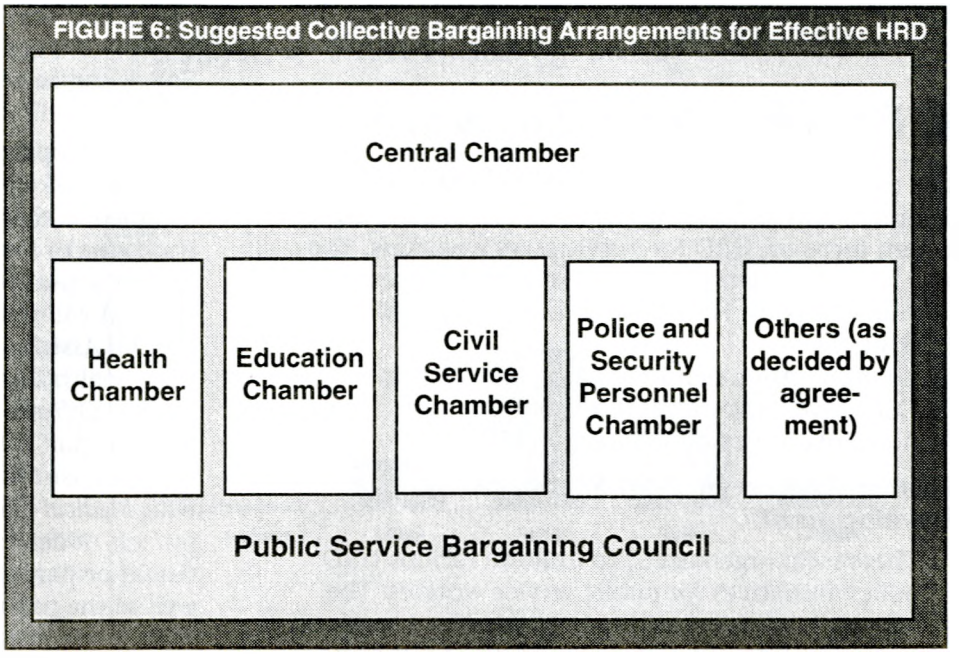
   The problems being faced include uncertainty on the jurisdiction of the different chambers of the PSBC and the ELRC over matters of mutual interest. If the different chambers of the PSBC and the ELRC have jurisdiction, then what is the division of responsibility between these structures? Another problem relates to the representation of government at the negotiations. In the PSBC government is represented by the

FIGURE 5: Current Collective Bargaining Arrangements for the Public Service



PSC. On matters related to HRD, this representation is a problem. Departments and Provinces are crucial to the process but are only indirectly involved. On the other hand, in the Education Labour Relations Council, the Department of Education is part of the negotiations.

It is suggested that a single PSBC be established by the Labour Relations Act (LRA) (see Figure 6). The Council should consist of a Central Chamber as well as Chambers for each of the streams (Sectoral Chambers). The Sectoral Chambers would be agreed between the employer and employee organisations. In this model there would be no need for Provincial and departmental Chambers. Where appropriate, departments and Provinces must be represented on the Sectoral Chambers. For example, the Department of Health as well as Provincial health departments will interact with the Health Bargaining Chamber.



2. The division of issues between the Central Chamber and the Sectoral Chambers will need to be negotiated between the employer and employee organisations. For HRD, it is recommended that the Central Chamber negotiate and agree upon the overall framework for HRD. The Sectoral Chambers will be empowered to develop detailed measures on grading, wages, and training within this framework which will be submitted to the Central Chamber for ratification.
3. If the above approach to collective bargaining is adopted by the current Central Chamber, then the question of representation on the Sectoral and Central Chambers will need to be discussed.

Administrative and Institutional Arrangement

1. Major reforms would need to occur in relation to the role of the Department of Administration if successful HRD is to be implemented.
2. In addition, changes in the administration of personnel matters would need to occur. As an example, the current Public Service Staff Code should be relegated in status. Policy positions in the Code should only remain in force while new positions are being negotiated by the Chambers of the Bargaining Council. In order to ensure that employee organisations are not amending fundamentally flawed policy positions, it is recommended that agreements be written up and filed separately from the current Code. The Department for Administration can then develop detailed procedures and measures based on the policy positions agreed with employee organisations. These can be contained in a revised Public Service Staff Code.

SECTION 6

A Short Case Study – Health

The conclusions and observations made in this report can be illustrated by reviewing current HRD strategies for health.

At the end of December 1994 a committee mandated to develop policy proposals on human resources for health submitted a report to the Minister of Health. The report is extremely useful and addresses many crucial issues of importance. Thus, this case study is premised by an acknowledgement of, and respect for, the bulk of the findings and recommendations of the report. However, the report fails in establishing an HRD strategy consistent with the challenges identified in the RDP (and which were outlined in Section 2 of this research report).

The report submitted to the Ministry of Health is build on the understanding that health care workers comprise doctors, nurses, and other professional categories of health care personnel. This has led the committee to the understanding that:

> *The maldistribution of doctors and nurses in spite of adequate numbers and the shortage of other categories of health personnel has led the Committee to the conclusion that in order to meet the needs of the South African population a health service built around these two categories, with due regard to the role of all other categories, was feasible.*
>
> *(Report of the Human Resources Committee for Health, 1994, page i)*

The report only mentions non-professional workers in the health services in the context of remuneration. It suggests that:

> *The remuneration packages of all health personnel be reviewed with a view to narrowing the salary gap between the highest and lowest paid workers. An attempt should be made to pay the lowest category of worker in the health services a living wage (R1 500 a month)*
>
> *(Report of the Human Resource Committee for Health, 1994, page viii)*

The above sentiments are most welcome. However, within the current grading and salary structuring systems, achieving a minimum wage of R1 500 may prove to be extremely difficult. The difficulties arise because of two considerations.

Firstly, the remuneration policy of the public service is to offer market-related salaries. A review of wage levels and patterns in South Africa reveal that the minimum wage for unskilled occupations is well below the R1 500 a month level[17]. The pressures of fiscal discipline and of reducing government expenditure make it unlikely that government will offer higher wages than the private sector. These dynamics are central to the current impasse in wage negotiations for the public service.

Secondly, current salary levels in the public service impose a restriction on achieving the R1 500 minimum wage level. More than 50 percent of public servants (excluding educators) earn below R1 500. This includes all categories of unskilled occupations as well as several categories of semi-skilled and skilled occupations. Occupations range from *General Assistants* to *Assistant Operators* and *Assistant Medical Technical Officers* (at entry level). Increases in the minimum will need to complemented by appropriate changes along the entire key salary scale. The costs of achieving these changes will run into billions of rands.

It is clear that introducing a minimum wage of R1 500 is unlikely to be achieved within the current framework. A more appropriate wage strategy is dependent on changes in work organisation, changes in the roles of public servants, and skills development, amongst others. This understanding may be central to the development of an effective HRD strategy. In the health sector, this requires a recognition of the health care role that all classes of personnel in health facilities play. In fact, it has been shown that some of the tasks performed by *General Assistants* at Hillbrow Hospital can be classified as health care provision (de Bruyn, 1995, page 6).

Thus, *General Assistants* in health care facilities must be provided with skills that will enable them to fulfil certain roles in a health institution. These could include skills on patient care, assisting in casualties, hygiene, etc. However, to be successful, the training must be accredited. Workers undergoing training must be evaluated for competency. Training should enable lifelong training so that workers can progress to higher skill levels. The current occupational class *Staff Nurse* allows workers without the necessary formal qualifications to develop the skills to become a *Professional Nurse*. However, this is the exception rather than the rule. To become the rule will require the introduction of a skills-based grading system for the public service.

Skills-based grading systems are based on skills instead of tasks. Tasks are what workers do. Skills are attributes that enable workers to perform certain tasks. The performance of a task is usually the product of a combination of different skills (a competency). In terms of a skill-based grading movement up a grade (and an increase in salary) is determined by one criterion only - skill competency (COSATU, 1994).

In a skills-based grading system, a series of skills levels need to be created. These skills levels must cover all workers from *Cleaners* to *Medical Officers*. Within each skill level, skills descriptors and tasks that can be performed by a worker on that skill level need to be specified. Movement up the skills ladder is characterised by the need for more specific skills as

opposed to generic skills. In terms of wages, higher skills are rewarded by higher wages. The wages for the various skills levels are determined by setting wage relativities (as a percentage of a certain benchmark wage).

The number of skills level, the skills descriptors, the tasks that can be performed within each skill level, and the wage relativities are all subject to negotiation between employers and employees. Furthermore, it is different from one industry to another and from one function to another. The skills-based grading system for administrative personnel (civil servants) will be different than that for health. The successful implementation of a skills-based grading system for health, as envisaged in the RDP White Paper, will require specific bargaining arrangements for health workers. Thus, the need for a health chamber of the Public Service Bargaining Council. However, a Central Chamber is required to ensure national norms and standards and a common framework between the various sectors. Institutional bargaining structures are required to deal with the implementation of the grading system for that institution and for individual workers.

This case study is presented with the limited aim of illustrating the need for a HRD strategy and the radical changes required to ensure that this strategy is successful. Adoption of this reports suggestions will require changes on a range of factors which is given scant attention here. This includes such major issues as the:

- role of the PSC and the Department for Administration;
- wage bargaining arrangements;
- training arrangements including Training Boards;
- relationship between the different institutions (Provinces, departments, institutions, etc.); and,
- role of stakeholders other than employees and government, as employer.

These issues are, however, the subject for future discussion, negotiation, and research.

ENDNOTES

1. This covers all workers located in central government departments and in provincial administrations. As such it excludes workers at local government level and workers employed by the parastatals. However, the policy principles outlined in this report are applicable to all workers in the public sector.
2. This understanding is not restricted to industries. It is equally, if not more, applicable to the service sector, including the public service.
3. The Institute for Planning Research of the University of Port Elizabeth has set a Household Effective Level of R15 432 a year as at September 1994.
4. R1 500 a month is demanded by unions and staff associations in the Public Service Bargaining Council as the minimum wage for the 1995/ 1996 year. This translates to an annual salary of R18 000
5. The actual annual wage of the majority of full-time cleaners is R10 800 per annum while the wages for Director-Generals is fixed at R266 784 per annum.
6. Currently, police and other security personnel do not have access to legislated collective bargaining arrangements. However, discussions have begun between police and the Ministry of Safety and Security after a wave of strikes by police personnel in the first few months of 1995.
7. Lucienne Nyembe from the Provincial Service Commission for the Gautang Province
8. See the case study on health at the end of this report
9. Letter received from Mr. RS Pretorius from the Office of the PSC dated 16 February 1995
10. Jobs requiring little or no skills were located in the General A and General B Sections
11. Letter received from Mr. RS Pretorius from the Office of the PSC dated 16 February 1995
12. The key salary scale consisted of 79 notches as at April 1994
13. On 10 November 1993, the PSC issued a circular requesting departments to re-classify *General Assistants* (GAs). GAs were re-classified into the 13 Occupational Classes with effect from 1 November 1993.
14. In terms of the Interim Constitution of 1993, the functions of the CFA were undertaken by the PSC
15. The minimum and maximum are those outlined in the PAS. In most instances, individuals that earn below the minimum (not on a full-time contract) as well as those who earn above the maximum (on an individual contract).
16. In April 1995, a decision was taken by Cabinet to separate the PSC from the Office of the PSC. The Office of the PSC would be restructured into a Department of Administration directly accountable to the Minister for Public Services and Administration.
17. The median salary for Labourers in manufacturing, as determined by PE Corporate Services in 1994, was R15 612 per annum or R1 300 a month.

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APPENDIX 1

Occupational Families in the Public Service

Occupational Family	Number of Personnel	% of total
School and College-Related Educators	280 364	28.73%
General Services Assistants	159 138	16.31%
Services Line and Related Personnel	156 195	16.01%
Administrative and Human Science Personnel	100 485	10.30%
Nursing and Related Personnel	75 565	7.74%
Specialised Auxiliary Services	34 630	3.55%
Household/ Food Services Personnel	27 298	2.80%
Term Service System/ Volunteers	20 095	2.06%
Medical Personnel	12 812	1.31%
Road Construction Personnel	12 164	1.25%
Occupational Class does not exist	12 134	1.24%
Secretarial Personnel	9 890	1.01%
Security Personnel	8 779	0.90%
Driver	8 506	0.87%
Natural Science, Industrial and Related Personnel	8 342	0.85%
Artisan and Related Personnel	7 532	0.77%
Foreman	6 322	0.65%
Legal Personnel	4 591	0.47%
Natural Science Professional Personnel	3 821	0.39%
Regulatory Personnel	3 396	0.35%
Social Service Personnel	3 261	0.33%
Operators and Machine Attenders	3 099	0.32%
Medical Technical Personnel	2 274	0.23%
Management Echelon	2 258	0.23%
Telecommunication Personnel	2 050	0.21%
Information Technology Personnel	1 656	0.17%
Care Personnel	1 601	0.16%
Architects, Engineers, and Related Personnel	1 323	0.14%
Pioneer	1 259	0.13%
Water Plant Personnel	1 070	0.11%
Factory Personnel: Government Printing Works	699	0.07%
Economic Personnel	604	0.06%
Fingerprint Personnel	340	0.03%
Nutritionists	305	0.03%
Mining, Occupational, and Aviation Safety Personnel	293	0.03%
Statutory Officebearers	242	0.02%
Multi-disciplinary Personnel	208	0.02%
Ships Personnel	208	0.02%
Umbrella Post Classes	179	0.02%
Survey Personnel	176	0.02%
Dispensation for Specialist Scientist	126	0.01%
Fire Services Personnel	124	0.01%
Auxiliary Personnel: Fighting Element (SANDF)	105	0.01%
Technical Operator	71	0.01%
Auxiliary Health Services Personnel	64	0.01%
Research Personnel and Members of Visiting Team	59	0.01%
Military University Educators	32	0.00%
Aviation Inspector	13	0.00%
Air Traffic Control Personnel	10	0.00%
Instrumentalist (Brass Band)	6	0.00%
Executioner	2	0.00%
Pre-Pas	1	0.00%
	975 77	100%

APPENDIX 2

Re-classification of General Assistants

Occupational Class	Occupational Family	Number of workers
Linen Stores Assistant	Household/ Food Services Personnel	504
Farm Aid	General Services Assistant	1 868
Laundry Aid	Household/ Food Services Personnel	2 037
Messenger	General Services Assistant	2 331
Forestry Services Aid	General Services Assistant	2 415
Household Aid	Household/ Food Services Personnel	5 692
General Stores Assistant	General Services Assistant	7 320
Food Services Aid	Household/ Food Services Personnel	7 995
Tradesman Aid	General Services Assistant	9 126
Road Workers Aid	Road Construction Personnel	9 206
Groundsman	General Services Assistant	14 265
General Assistant	To be reclassified	20 898
Cleaner	General Services Assistant	42 945
Labourer	General Services Assistant	54 761
		181 363

APPENDIX 3

Elements of a Personal Administration Standard (PAS)

1. *Scope of Applicability*
2. *Implementation*
3. *Post classes, post class gradings, ranks, salary scales and prescribed job contents*
4. *Norms/ guides for purposes of establishment determination*
5. *Specific worker specification*
6. *Recruitment*
7. *Selection*
8. *Appointment Measures*
9. *Remunerative payments over and above salary*
10. *Salary progression measures*
11. *Promotion measures*
12. *Horizontal mobility*
13. *Training and Development*
14. *Incentive measures*
15. *Service benefit awards*
16. *Worker compensation*
17. *Work facilities provision*
18. *Termination of Service*
19. *Other Measures*
20. *Measures with regard to employees*
21. *Measures with regard to serving personnel (permanent or temporary) who, in terms of the general measures, did not qualify for translation to the revised dispensation contained in this PAS.*

APPENDIX 4

Income ranges of the different Occupational Families

Occupational Class	Number of workers	Income Range
General Services Assistants	159 138	low
Operators and Machine Attenders	3 099	low
Pioneer	1 259	low
Executioner	2	low
Services Line and Related Personnel	156 195	low-high
Administrative and Human Science Personnel	100 485	low-high
Nursing and Related Personnel	75 565	low-high
Household/ Food Services Personnel	27 298	low-high
Road Construction Personnel	12 164	low-high
Natural Science, Industrial and Related Personnel	8 342	low-high
Artisan and Related Personnel	7 532	low-high
Regulatory Personnel	3 396	low-high
Medical Technical Personnel	2 274	low-high
Water Plant Personnel	1 070	low-high
Fingerprint Personnel	340	low-high
Ships Personnel	208	low-high
Fire Services Personnel	124	low-high
Specialised Auxiliary Services Personnel	34 630	low-middle
Secretarial Personnel	9 890	low-middle
Security Personnel	8 779	low-middle
Driver	8 506	low-middle
Foreman	6 322	low-middle
Telecommunication Personnel	2 050	low-middle
Care Personnel	1 601	low-middle
Factory Personnel: Government Printing Works	699	low-middle
Survey Personnel	176	low-middle
Technical Operator	71	low-middle
Air Traffic Control Personnel	10	low-middle
School and College Related Educators	280 364	middle-high
Medical Personnel	12 812	middle-high
Legal Personnel	4 591	middle-high
Natural Science Professional Personnel	3 821	middle-high
Social Service Personnel	3 261	middle-high
Information Technology Personnel	1 656	middle-high
Architects, Engineers, and Related Personnel	1 323	middle-high
Economic Personnel	604	middle-high
Nutritionists	305	middle-high
Mining, Occupational, and Aviation Safety Personnel	293	middle-high
Multi-disciplinary Personnel	208	middle-high
Management Echelon	2 258	very high
Term Service System/ Volunteers	20 095	
Occupational Class does not exist	12 134	
Statutory Officebearers	242	
Umbrella Post Classes	179	
Dispensation for Specialist Scientist	126	
Auxiliary Personnel: Fighting Element (SANDF)	105	
Auxiliary Health Services Personnel	64	
Research Personnel and Members of Visiting Team	59	
Military University Educators	32	
Aviation Inspector	13	
Instrumentalist (Brass Band)	6	
Pre-Pas	1	

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