Case study 8:

Building Africa's Capacity

the "African way"

CONTENT

EDITORIAL

H.E. Kwesi Quartey
Deputy Chairperson
African Union Commission

The African Union is an organization characterized by an ever-changing environment, politically, economically and socially. Moreso, it is a multi-cultural environment that attracts people of different cultures, beliefs and perceptions. This uniqueness brings with it immense value, of the human resource the organization attracts. Once well harnessed, the human capacity allows for the personal development of the staff and that potential, essentially feeds into the growth of the organization. The African Union therefore, has and continues to invest heavily on human capacity building through its learning and training programmes and initiatives. This also helps the organization to evaluate, compensate, promote and other rewards the employees based on performance.

Capacity building initiatives have been evident in the establishment and expansion of the Pan African Universities, whose graduates are exposed to diverse skills and knowledge, internship placements and mentorship advantages that make them adequately prepared and competitive in the labour market. This points out to how vital it is to invest in the learning, training and development of African population. The African Union Leadership Academy, a learning and development Unit of the African Union, has expanded to offer relevant on-job skills development for the staff of the African Union, as the organization aims to attract and retain a productive workforce that is able adapt to a fast-paced, dynamic and challenging environment that calls for creative and analytical individuals. The potential of the African Union Leadership Academy has also expanded to include the African citizenry, including those in diaspora, in understanding and being able to contribute to the activities of the African Union. This has been achieved in the establishment of the "Mjadala Afrika", a platform that allows the leadership of the African Union secretariat, which is the African Union Commission, to interact with the citizenry through debate.

The African Union Theme for the 2017 "Harnessing the demographic through investments in youth", is timely especially because Africa is at a cross-road, Africa needs to explore the potential in its greatest asset, the youth, by choosing to harness that demographic dividend and unlocking the massive opportunity we have in a growing young population, or continue sitting on a ticking time bomb.

Education programs and systems, organizations policies, and entrepreneurs must therefore be drafted to make deliberate efforts to move away from the status quo and invest heavily, on building human capacity through learning, training and development and be able to harness that into the massive socio-economic growth and broader impact prospects, it has on the continent.
Let us invest in knowledge.

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The number of **people** trained under Learning and Development in 2016

has increased by

616%

compared to 2014
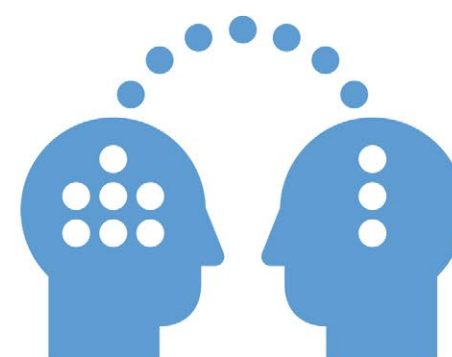
The number of **activities** carried out under the African Union Leadership Academy during the second semester of 2016

has increased by

367%

compared to first semester after the launching.

The number of **partnerships** fostered for the African Union capacity development in 2016

has increased by

160%

compared to 2015

ENSURING THE AVAILABILITY AND THE UPDATE OF THE NECESSARY CAPACITIES AT ALL TIMES AND IN ALL SITUATIONS

## THE AFRICAN UNION CAPACITY BUILDING JOURNEY TOWARD THE AFRICA WE WANT

The African Union has put in place three main initiatives in Africa to ensure that the necessary capacities to build the *Africa We Want* are available at all times, in all situations and are up to date:

• **Learning and Development** to improve and respond to the knowledge and skills needs of AU staff;

• **The Talent and Performance Management** so that a pool of quality talent can always work and achieve the short-term and long-term objectives of the organization;

• **The African Union Leadership Academy** to galvanize actions in Africa through the creation of the needed leaders across the continent.
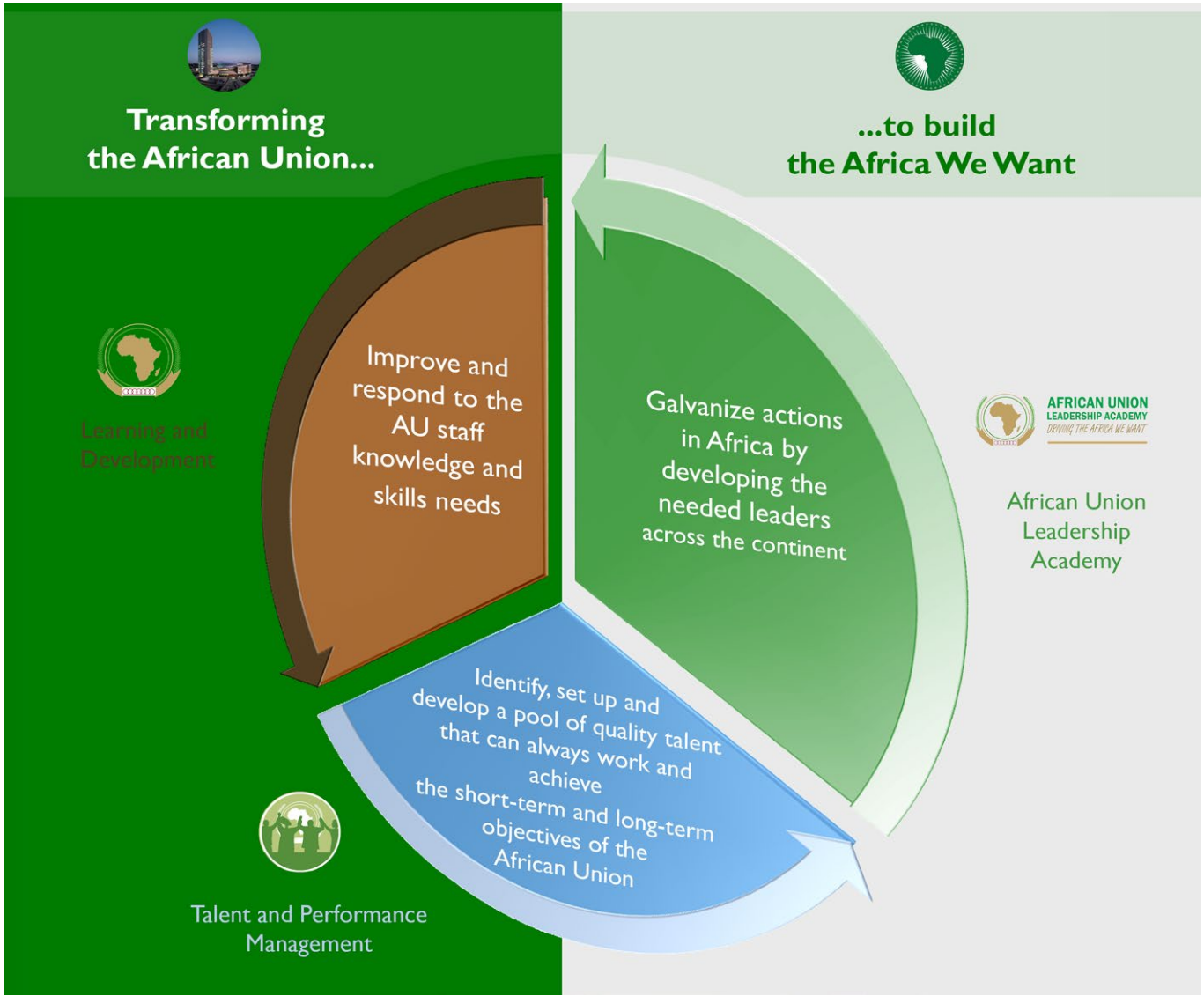
THE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT OF AU

The Learning and Development Unit (L&D) within the Directorate of Administration and Human Resources Management is mandated to enhance the current and future organizational performance of the African Union Commission (AUC) by increasing employees' abilities to maximize performance in order to deliver and meet the Agenda 2063's aspirations. The Unit is committed to supporting the continued growth and development of the African Union's most valuable resource, its people. It is only a staff that has the capacity and the right knowledge and skills that can transform the African union into the Africa We Want.

Vision

A Commission works force that have skills and abilities to maximize performance in delivering the agenda 2063.

In developing the capacity of African Union to deliver on its aspirations L&D Unit focus on the following:

• Induction Programme- Welcoming new Staff;
• Staff Professional Development;
• Internship programme for African Graduates;
• One Africa through promotion of languages

Objectives

In our continuing efforts to meet AUC's internal needs, the Learning and Development Unit continually observes and assesses individual, departmental and organizational needs in order to:

• Assist employees in their personal and professional development and advancement;
• Conceptualize, design and present training programs intended to motivate, challenge, strengthen and enlighten staff and to align professional skills with organizational needs;

• Improve key interpersonal skills including communication, customer service, problem solving and conflict resolution skills;
• Improve quality and quantity of productivity;
• Induct new employees to the AUC;
• Promote and support change and assist individual and departments as they adapt to change;
• Promote the AUC values and competencies;
• Support institutional mission and strategy.

*** **Written by Learning and Development Team**

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THE TALENT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT UNIT OF THE AU

The African Union has a compelling vision in Agenda 2063. This vision clarifies our focus over the next 50 years. Seven Aspirations articulate how to effectively deliver this vision. Amongst the seven Aspirations, is the requirement for 'an Africa whose development is people-driven, focusing on potential of its women and youth'. This means that Talent Management is not a fringe issue for AU. The availability and quality of different talent pools in the organization will ensure a high performance culture that will consistently attain the short-term strategic objectives and ultimately the long term vision as envisaged in Agenda 2063. In this context, AU's Talent Management approach is defined as a multi-layered process which entails organisational ability to effectively attract, develop, retain and motivate staff - to optimally perform

individually as well as collectively across all jobs and in particular within critical positions. Its vision is to

"Continually Build Tomorrow's Talent Today for the Africa We Want".

The progress made towards this end during 2016 includes:

1. A review of the of the Talent Management approach and related tools;

2. Revitalizing the Performance Management processes and system;

3. Strengthening partnerships around knowledge exchange and experience sharing;

*** **Written by Talent and Performance Management Team**

THE AFRICAN UNION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The African Union Leadership Academy (AULA) has started as an ambitious plan, with a vision to equip AU human capital with the skills and mindsets needed to achieve the goals of Agenda 2063 create a center of excellence in the area of public sector administration. AULA's strategic objectives include support to current senior public servants and middle managers from the African Union Commission (AUC), AU Organs, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States by improving their leadership and managerial skills. In addition, it strives to induct public servants into contextualized African system of leadership development that is adapted to the continent's needs. The Academy also aims to train emerging young African leaders who will form the future elite of the AU, Member States, and related organizations.

Launched on the margins of the 26th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government which took place on 28th January 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia AULA's result-based implementation roadmap targets to reach 1500 individuals with leadership development training programs on a yearly basis. A gap-assessment conducted by the Academy highlighted; existing capacity programs are fragmented and not aligned to key pillars of capacity building specific to the African context. Hence, the need for a dedicated agency that executes training on skills critical for implementing Agenda 2063, creating transformational leaders within AU and across Africa's public sector. To this end, AULA developed learning content and delivery modules for capacity building solutions in Africa's public sector. The pilot capacity-building program implemented a number of sessions for mid-career and senior-level officials of the AUC. AULA also demonstrated its commitment in developing strategic leadership through training in the areas of diplomacy and mediation for members of the AU Permanent Representative Committee (PRC).

In 2017, AULA is focusing on four key areas of strategic skill development including, leadership for Africa's transformation, project management for Africa's transformation, AU integration and legal instruments, and policy program dialogues. In, addition, it will convene various platforms for knowledge sharing with AU stakeholders in both formal and informal settings. Target audience will cover members of the PRC, AU elected officials, emerging young African leaders, AU Directors, AU Heads of Division and Technical Advisers and selected AU staff. Finally, our continuous result measurement system that ties implementation to specific outcome-indicator ensures that AULA delivers on its goals.
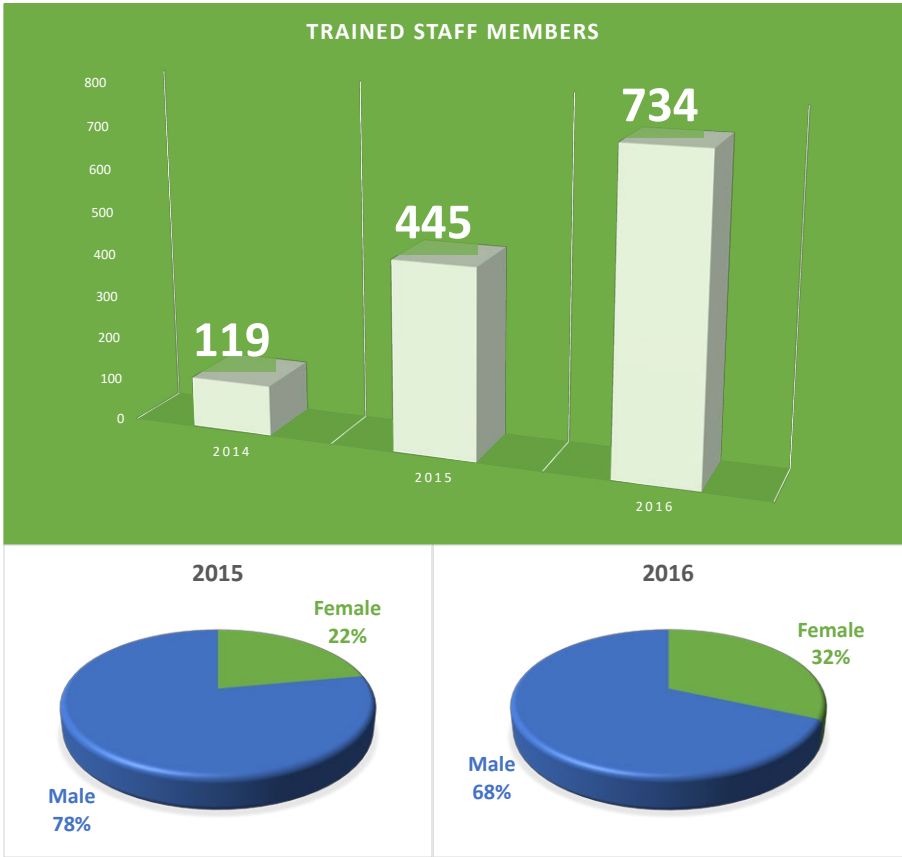
*** **Written by African Union Leadership Academy Team**

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AN INCREASED AFRICAN CAPACITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS IN BUILDING THE AFRICA WE WANT

A WIDER RANGE OF TRAININGS AND MORE TRAINED PEOPLE

TRAINED STAFF MEMBERS

The Directorate of Administration and Human Resources Management remains strongly committed toward embracing the needed change for the Commission. Success has been built on the foundations in 2015 and 2016, and it is expected that this success will be strengthened in 2017 in order to have a strong beginning of the next Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

Particularly in 2016 , L&D Unit conducted several trainings to staff members of the African Union Commission, including staff from Regional and Liaison offices as well as African Union Organs. Overall, L&D organized 20 trainings for 119 Staff in the year 2014, 19 trainings for 495 staff in 2015 and 30 trainings covering different areas of expertise for 734 staff members in the year 2016. This represents almost over 80 percent in-crease in participation to the trainings and is a big achievement for the African Union Commission.

The trainings covered the following areas : Project Management Foundation and Preparation for CAPM Certificate, Contract Management and Administration, Project Management Foundation, Project Management – MS Office Project, Contract Negotiation Skills, Leadership Skills for Senior Managers, Strategic Procurement, Effective Communication, Motivation, Navigating Change, Driving Results through Innovation, Management Training and Performance Management and Appraisal Training among others. The team also facilitated Language Courses (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and Ahmaric) as well as orientation sessions for newly recruited staff. Furthermore, several trainings and learning experience sharing sessions were also organised in the areas of Human Resources, SAP and Security and Safety Services. Furthermore, through its partnership with organizations and governments, sponsored trainings were organized by the African Union Commission namely the People's Republic of China sponsored three (3) trainings, which are Seminar on Performance Management, Seminar on Public Administration and Seminar on Enhancing Planning Abilities. The International Organization of Francophonie sponsored trainings on Management of Institutional Change, Public Speaking and Training of Trainers. A total of One Hundred and Four (104) members of staff undergone the various trainings sponsored by the cooperating partners.

A NEW APPROACH TO REVITALIZE TALENT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

To ascertain and ensure an alignment of this approach with the vision envisaged in 2063, a review of the AU talent management approach was needed. A further aim of the review was to assess and provide direction on the specific HR processes and relevant tools to improve or develop with a view to systematically implement revised Talent Management approach. The review revealed some strong dimensions. However, numerous challenges exist in other areas of the approach. Some of the main challenges identified and suggested solution are outlined in the figure below:

AU Talent Management Approach: Challenges and Suggested Improvements

Given the findings of the review, the Talent and Performance Management team opted for an incremental approach to address the challenges. In the first instant, it became clear that the performance management processes and system need revision in order to align with the result based approach of 2063. In addition, the AU Competency Framework – a critical Talent Management tool, was revise. As depicted in the next figure ,the framework is now leaner and categorized in the three dimension of:
1. Core competencies
2. Functional competencies
3. Leadership Competencies

The revised Competency Framework will be applied in the areas of recruitment, performance management and staff development. All competencies will apply to staff holding managerial/leadership position. The Core and Functional competencies will be applied to staff holding non-management positions.

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AU Competency Framework

Building the Africa We Want

Core Competencies	Functional Competencies	Leadership Competencies
▪ Building Relationships ▪ Responsibility ▪ Learning Orientation ▪ Communicating with Impact	▪ Conceptual Thinking and Problem Solving ▪ Job Knowledge ▪ Drive for Results ▪ Innovative & Taking Initiatives	▪ Strategic Perspective ▪ Developing Others ▪ Driving Change ▪ Managing Risk

Value-Alignment

Respect for diversity and team work | Think Africa above all | Transparency and Accountability | Integrity and Impartiality | Efficiency and Professionalism | Information and Knowledge sharing

Why Revitalise the Performance Management?

Performance Management is mandated by the Staff Regulations and Rules (SRR). According to Rule 36 of the SRR: 'Staff members shall be evaluated annually by the immediate supervisors for their efficiency, competence and integrity through performance appraisal mechanisms that shall assess the staff member's compliance with the deliverable standards set out in the Staff Regulations and Rules for purposes of accountability and continuity in the service of the Union'.

Other benefits performance management includes:

Ensure alignment between the organization's objectives and individual jobs

Enable employees to understand their individual contribution to the achievement of the organization's objectives

Satisfy the 5 basic workplace expectations of an employee i.e.:
- Let employees know what is expected of them;
- Give employees the opportunity to perform;
- Assist, guide and develop employees;
- Discuss employees progress;
- Recognize and reward employees according to their contribution.

The reasons for revitalizing the AU performance management and processes are outlined the figure below:

Problems to be addressed		Expected Outcome	
Objectives Non-Aligned	• Organisation, Directorate/Department, Unit and Individual Objectives not aligned	Balanced Score Card Concept Introduced	• Cascading of Organisational Objectives, Values and Competencies to Directorate/Department, Unit and Individual levels
SAP Capability Under Utilised	• SAP - Too much emphasis on customization	New SAP Capabilities	• Less Customization on various levels • optimal use of the SAP system capabilities
Complex Policy Document	• PMAF too dense and at times incoherent	Simplified new Policy	• Policy now only 14 pages/ Quality not compromised; • Roles and responsibilities clarified
Employee Rating not calibrated	• 1st and 2nd Line manager only moderate the rating. May results inconsistency and unfairness	Calibration Concept Introduced	Calibration panel to be set up to moderate ratings at various levels - to ensure consistency and fairness. Unit, HOD and Director levels
Performance not Linked to Talent Management e.g Succession Planning	• Performance results not used for Talent mapping.	Talent Management and Succession Planning	• **Talent Identification** • Talent Mapping and planning • Talent Development (PDP) • Competency Development
Inconsistencies on Reward and Recourse Practices	• Standard salary increments leading to ~95% of employees moving up on the salary scale after annual reviews. Action on poor performance rare	Clarity on Reward and Recourse	• *Reward best performers disproportionately and engagement* • *Disincentives for underperformance*

The specific process and system improvements made include:

PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
• Revitalized and eaner Competencies • New Performance Management Cycle • Cascading goals concept – Corporate and Team goals • Personal Development Plans • Self appraisals at Mid-term and End-term • Calibration for fairer ratings • Performance Improvement Plans	SAP now allows for: • Corporate goals to be cascaded to all staff • Managers to cascade team goals to their staff • Personal Development Plans • Staff to comment on their progress against the achievement of objectives at Mid-term and End-term • The capture of calibrated ratings and comments of the calibration panel. • Offline completion of appraisal form

To create awareness and solicit further input from staff on the revitalized Talent and Performance Management approach, information sharing sessions (Roadshows) have been planned across AUC offices and Organs. A total of 300 staff have so far attended the 'Roadshows' and provided invaluable input. Look out for the scheduled Roadshow for your department or region and we look forward to see you as well as to receive your input!

*** **Written by Talent and Performance Management Team**

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TRAININGS, KNOWLEDGE SHARING, POLICY PROGRAM DIALOGUES AND DEBATE TO PREPARE AFRICA'S LEADERS

In its inaugural year, AULA undertook 14 activities within its four categories of programs: three trainings, five knowledge sharing and four policy program dialogues (PPDs). In addition to that, a debate with the candidates for the position of the AU Chairperson and two seminars were held. Below are highlights of some of these activities.

Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification program:

The AULA kick-started its programs with an internationally recognized Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification program in partnership with Project Management Institute's (PMI) Global Registered Education Provider. The program aimed at building capacity for AU staff members through rigorous, learner-centered/driven program. The program is an enactment of membership into a community of global project management practitioners – who are continuously learning and contributing to the project management body of knowledge (PMBOK). Thirty-seven (37) participants completed the program. A follow up session was conducted in March 2016 as part of securing the mandatory 35 hours of instruction by a certified instructor as well as obtaining the required reading materials.

Creative Thinking training program:

This training aimed at taking AUC managers through hands- on and practical way in dealing with and resolving challenges as well as complexity at work place and elsewhere. The exercise includes actual situations analysis, and experimenting with solution through co-creation. Twenty-one participants from AUC have completed this program.
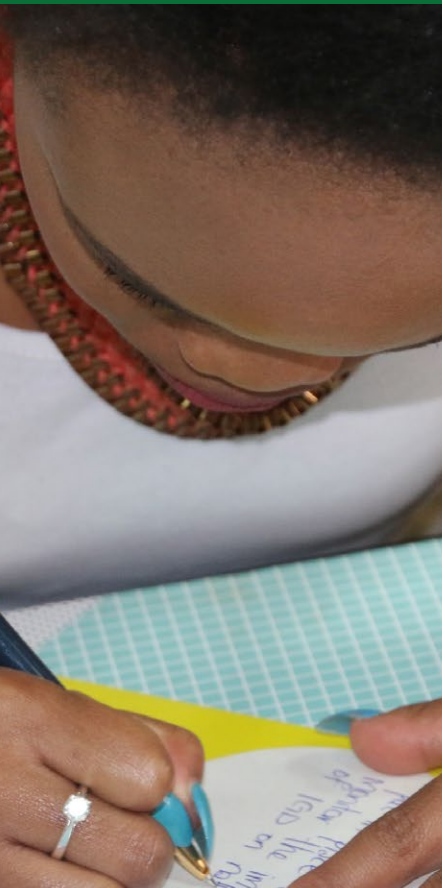
Balanced Scorecard:

The program aimed at introducing and enhancing the AUC's Senior Management and middle-level team's readiness to implement the Balanced Scorecard methodology. The program equipped participants with knowledge and skills to utilize BSC framework in formulating work-plans and in tracking progress towards identified goals. It also offered structured methods to translate strategy into operational reality; aligning the organization to the strategy; making strategy a continual process; and mobilizing change through leadership that undertakes performance contracting with Managers who then will cascade the same commitment across the different departments. Twenty-four

Permanent Representative Committee (PRC) Experience Sharing Program:

This program is geared towards updating the AUC PRC members. The program highlights and critically examined the following topics:

- the Impact of the history of the Africa Union on its functioning;
- approaches;
- implementations of legal instruments;
- current Governance Structures;
- their rationale and alignment to the implementation of the mandates;
- roles and responsibilities of Policy Organs and their interactions with AU;
- and how to strengthen decision-making processes.

The program brought together thirty-four members from the Permanent Representative Committee (PRC).

Youth and leadership:

In collaboration with the office of the chairperson and other departments hosted a group of twenty-three South African University Students, their Professors and Representatives from the Embassy of the Republic of South Africa. The visit aimed at enhancing the understanding about the AU among young leaders as well as understanding youth priorities. The group was also given the opportunity to observe the negotiation session of the Continental Free Trade Area – one of the flagship projects within Agenda 2063.

Given the growing discussion on the credibility of Public-Private Partnerships, AULA also convened a seminar on Private Philanthropy, Principles and Tips for Successful Partnerships successfully convened in partnership with the U.N. World Food Programme.

Experience sharing seminars:

The Academy convened three experience-sharing seminars with the members of the African Group of Ambassadors (Washington DC), academia and learning experts from the World Bank and the Organization of the American States. The aim of these experience sharing programs was to build partnerships with knowledge and learning institutions, academia, foundations, think tanks and other entities – as well as to share the AULA's plans.

Finally, just prior to the elections during the 28th Ordinary Assembly of the Heads of State and Government in January 2017, AULA organized a debate for the candidates aspiring for the post of the Chairperson of the AUC. The first time in its kind in the history of the AU.

Policy Program Dialogue (PPD):

AULA convened four-policy program dialogue session's multi-actor interfaces to provide platform for reflections and discussions on pertinent issues. These sessions were convened prominent themes of the year. The dialogues for 2016 included:

- reflections and taking-stock of the achievements of the Maputo Protocol on Gender Equality;
- formulation of the African Common Position on Habitat III;
- statistically driven implementation of Agenda 2063 during the 10th session of the African Committee of Director-Generals of National Statistics Office (CoDGs) and 5th Session of the Statistical Commission for Africa (STATCOM-AFRICA).

***   Written by African Union Leadership Academy Team

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THE AFRICAN UNION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY CONTINUES

MORE TECHNICAL TRAININGS
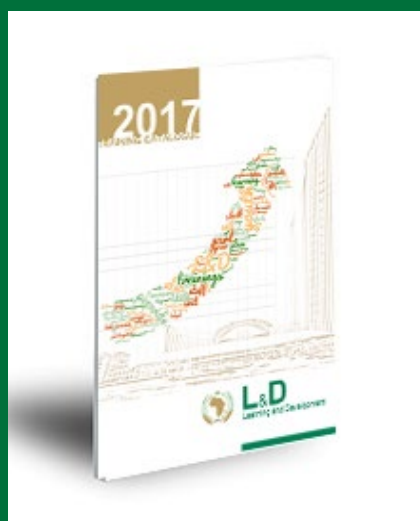
A 2017 training catalogue was developed and shared with staff at the beginning of the year. This catalogue is made available to the public on:

http://www.au.int/catalogue2016.pdf

In 2017, Eleven (11) main categories were identified with specific training on each portfolio. the following trainings have been scheduled :

1. Induction and On-boarding
2. Health and Safety
3. Service Effectiveness and Negotiation
4. Leadership for Performance Management
5. Managing Strategically
6. Diplomatic Etiquette and Protocol
7. Risk Management
8. Computer Skills
9. Language Courses
10. Benefits and Wellness
11. Continuous Professional Development Programs (CPDP)

In 2017, emphasis has been put on provision of more technical trainings as we strive to meet the need for a well trained staff that will deliver on the aspirations of the continent through our dreams contained in the Agenda 2063. Development of leadership skills and strategic management for Managers have been given priority in 2017 in order to build on the success from the capacity building initiatives from 2015 and 2016. African Union Commission shall continue to be a "Learning Organization".

*** **Written by Learning and Development Team**

WIDER DELIVERY OF A MORE RESPONSIVE PROGRAM
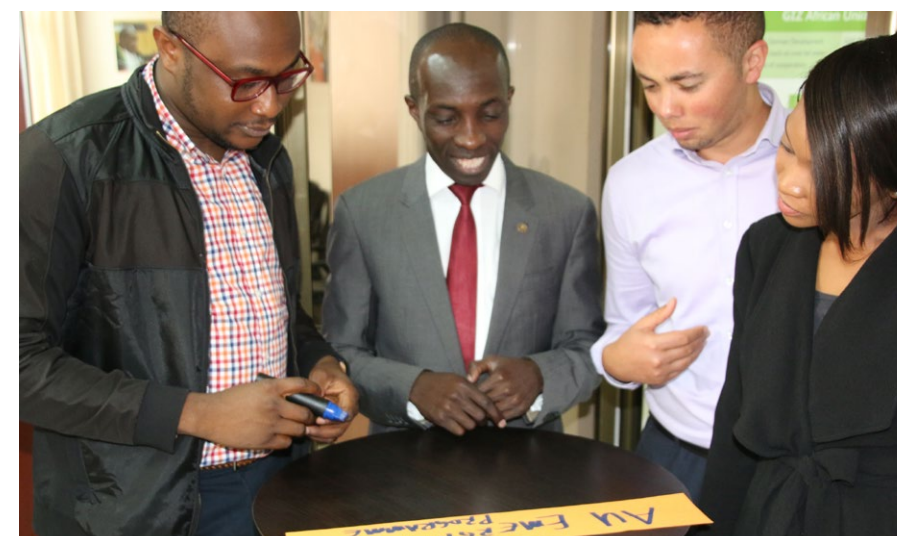
The initial efforts undertaken by the newly established African Union Leadership Academy (AULA) was focused mainly on implementing a particular set of programs on a limited scope. The plan is to include a wider delivery of a more responsive program in the next phase.

The work of AULA will expand strategically, updating its current programs and activities to take on board the evolving continental and global contexts, as well as establishing its position as a center of excellence in training and capacity development.

One of the major plan for the African Union Leadership Academy (AULA) is the launch of comprehensive and targeted programs with strategic expansion that features the following:

1. Enhance its institutional relevance to Member States, by introducing major changes to its current program profile, enhances visibility and presence in training loops. Main challenges for doing so relates to limited resources (both financial and human).

2. Focus on public sector administration: capacity development and training programs will be broadened to include Senior civil servants, and middle level Manages, officials from Africa public sector, and civil society. In particular, AULA will adopt a proactive approach to boost the participation of female public policy officials.

3. All AULA's capacity development and training programs integrate a gender dimension within them in line with a wider strategy for enhancing policy awareness of gender question and priorities. Particular focus will be made on youths with tailor made interventions.

4. AULA will integrate a follow-up system for trainings that will offer trainees further support and skills development, and inform future training programs design.

5. Introducing Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs): AULA will launch a MOOCs that can be used Africa wide.
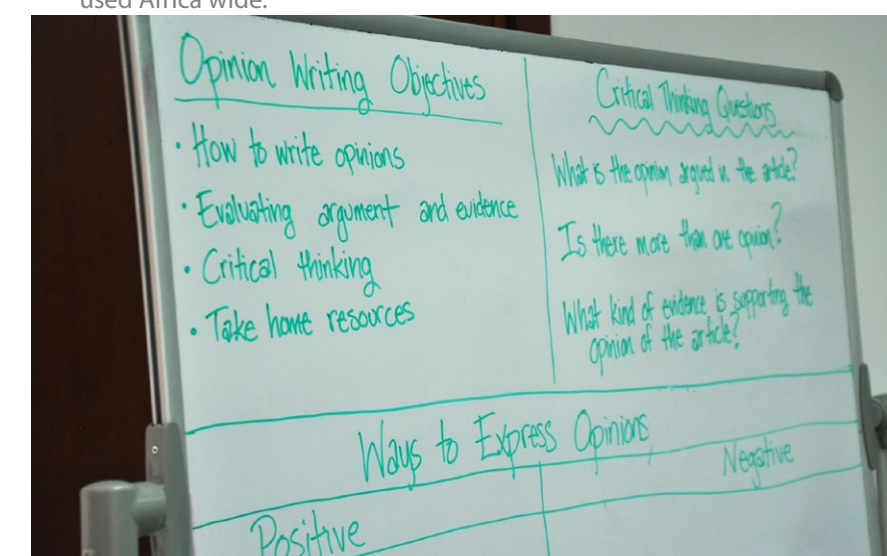
6. Knowledge production: The academy is planning to conduct and publish research in its four areas of delivery. In particular, an annual magazine featuring top Leadership Excellence in various fields will be published and lessons learnt from AULA's training will be produced and circulated.

7. Multi-media production: The academy will employ different types of media (audio, and video and documentary) to enhance delivery, publicize, and market its activities and programs.

8. Partnership and collaboration: The academy will revitalize existing collaborations, leveraging inputs from partner training institutes and global educational institutes around AULA thematic areas. The academy will also license out AULA certified courses, start the process of developing AULA certified courses, and license them to universities and institutions.

9. Knowledge sharing seminars: continue with the provision of flexible platforms to enhance or build the specific expertise, skills and in-depth knowledge for Managers and staff.

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AN APPROACH THAT MEETS AFRICANS NEEDS

Catherine Wanjiru Maina
Senior Social Worker, Department of Social Affairs
Addis Ababa - Ethiopia

"The training made me discover that literally everything communicates! Everything! The training has improved my communication skills immensely. After resuming office, I am deliberate in selecting the various forms of communication. I have the ability to utilize the various forms of communications such as text messaging, a call, a follow up email or letter to the respective receiver and to find out whether there is any issue that needs further elaboration or clarification. Moreover, I am extremely cautious when hitting the send button. I have now developed the habit of treating documents such as note verbal, reports and even emails as drafts prior to sending. This has enabled me to make the necessary corrections before sending to various recipients. I've taken conscious steps to improve my interpersonal skills through improving my sender and receiver skills. I am grateful for this training as it pushed me out of my comfort zone and set me on my toes. I would recommend the same to all staff..

Tesfaye Haile Michael
Procurement Officer, Procurement, Stores and Travel Division
Addis Ababa - Ethiopia

"Procurement and Contract Management was a very interesting topic as it directly related to my task. Because of this training I am able to relate essential parts of Human, Financial and Materials Managements and how they are inter related and interdependent in light of procurement at AUC. Furthermore I have developed a culture of consolidating documentation of every stage of project implementation for future review. I would like to thank the L&D Team for the opportunity and assure the team that the resource is well spent as I am using knowledge gained from the training in my daily work tasks".

Dr Odjo Johnson
Senior Program and Project Officer, African Academy of Languages (ACALAN)
Bamako -Mali

" I am glad that I was able to attend the training on Finance for Non Finance Managers. The training afforded me a great deal of insight into investment and investing wisely. I now contribute immensely to the financial planning and management within my unit."

Fikerte Feleke
Filing Clerk, AUC Registry
Addis Ababa - Ethiopia

"The training on effective communication skills and techniques gave me a very useful knowledge on how to perform and communicate in the workplace. I am now strong and assertive on how I communicate with my clients. I developed good working atmosphere and shared my knowledge with my colleagues. I am now conscious of how I communicate with colleagues and clients in ensuring that the communication is timely and effective."

Ms. Sabela Abebe,
Human Resources Operation Specialist, AUC
Addis Ababa - Ethiopia

"The three day training on Project Management was very helpful for me as it provided useful guidance on how to work on Projects using all the project resources such as time, team and others. Specifically I also learnt the essentials of time management such as prioritizing work schedules in order to achieve the desired end result. Because of the training I strive to be a team player as I am always conscious that my role is an ingredient to success for the whole team. Furthermore I also plan my work properly using the planning methods I learnt from the training. "

Mudzingwa Gideon Mushininga
Senior Certifying Officer and as a member of the AUC's Internal Procurement Committee (IPC)
Addis Ababa - Ethiopia

"Through my participation in the Strategic Procurement training I have a learnt a great deal specifically the 'best practices' for procurement which are very practical and helpful in my role as a Senior Certifying Officer and as a member of the AUC's Internal Procurement Committee (IPC). The training gave me insights on enhancing value for money and efficiency to operations through Strategic Procurement which I am applying in my scope of work. The training also introduced me to the four generic procurement categories by comparing the Strategic Impact and the Supply Risk of goods and services which are very fundamental in my role in IPC. The training was very relevant and helpful ".

*** Compiled by Learning and Development Team

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Thank you Mr. Jacques-Eymard for accepting our invitation. Can you please tell us about yourself and in a nutshell the main objective of the Learning and Development Unit of the African Union Commission (AUC)?

Thank you very much for coming to us. My name is Jacques Eymard. I am the Senior Human Resources Officer, in charge of Change Management. My activities are focused on Learning and Development. It aims at enhancing the current and future organizational effectiveness of the AUC by increasing employees' abilities to maximize performance in order to deliver and meet the continuous transformation projects we are working on.

We are talking about the transformation of the African Union to drive the Africa We Want. What were the main contributions of the Unit to this initiative?

We have been working since September 2015, and we achieved quite a lot. Our contributions includes, but not limited to, the fact of building a Unit, which is actually very effective. Furthermore, the team is operating very much professionally, independently. This fast track the work process. We trained from this period approximately 1,100 staff members on various capacity building areas. In addition, we have the new learning solution which is an application at its final stage of development. This is going to ensure that all the training processes are modernized, allowing us to link the training activities, performance management and appraisal. Moreover, the learning solution will focus on the real transformation, in terms of effectiveness. The team has achieved a lot from September 2015 and I am confident that the future will even be brighter.

"We trained (...) approximately 1,100 staff members on various capacity building areas."

What has been your most successful activities over the last two years?

To allow us deliver effectively there are certain mechanics that the Unit put in place. We have the training needs assessment, and we keep improving it. It is an interactive process involving all AU staff members and departments. The trainings are people-centered with a special focus on the needs of the staff because that is the primary concern of the Unit. Also, we develop training catalogs annually. Forty-nine (49) training programs were delivered to staff members.

You talked about achievements and changes previously. In terms of sustainability of the dynamics initiated what are your recommendations?

The AU should build the capacity of the Learning and Development team members to complement their expertise. Similarly the learning culture within the organization must be improved. In addition, the contribution should be drawn from various departments, offices, organs. Learning should be our value, staff should for learning for the subject and how it will transform their career and build the capacity of the organization. Managers should pay more attention to the training needs of the employees.

What are the main challenges you anticipate and your recommended solution?

There are a lot of challenges a but the main one is the issue with budget. The AU cannot solely relay on partners fundings. In that regards member states should increase their contribution to develop the learning capacities of the staff members. The AU should come up with concrete solution to be self-sufficient and reliance. We are very hopeful that 2017 will be a better year with regards to funding.

What would be your final message to the AU staff?

A call for attention to be drawn on what is being achieved, rather than focusing on the past bad experience. AU staff should engage more on updating their knowledge about the organization and develop their skills. "We must all get involved, no change is possible if all of us are not involved at the required level". The learning and development Unit is for all.

*** **Interview by Habiba B. Sule**

"Learning should be our value, staff should not go for learning just because of the venue but rather for the subject and how it will transform their career and build the capacity of the organization."

* Mr. Jacques-Eymard was the Head of Learnind and Development Unit of the African Union until February 2017

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