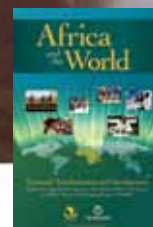




*Transforming the African Union
to drive the Africa we want.*

Case study three:

Staff Learning & Development to meet the real needs of Africa





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EDITORIAL

H.E. Dr. Nkosazana
Dlamini Zuma

The African Union has embarked on a transformation journey for the successful implementation of Agenda 2063. We mapped out our flagship projects and initiatives across the continent and at the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), with an aim to highlight the priority areas in the Agenda 2063 Framework and its first Ten Year Implementation Plan, for strategic execution. This calls for the need for the African Union to review its overall structure and equip its leaders with the relevant set of skills to achieve the ambitious goals captured in the Pan-African agenda.

The African Union operates in a dynamic, fast-paced environment which demands of its staff to adapt to unforeseeable factors, socio-political changes, and/or technological advancements. This can only be achieved through a continuous learning and development process within the institution. Training, learning and development, are therefore indispensable functions.

In this regard, we are launching the Staff learning and Development programme with an aim to prepare our staff to acquire new skills, sharpen existing ones, perform better and increase productivity which is essential for a continental institution. Significant progress has been achieved thus far, however, more work needs to be done to achieve the intended objective of the programme.

This publication therefore, is to assess progress made towards the development of this capacity and the further improvement, with focus on the Africa we yearn for tomorrow.



The number of people trained in 2015 has

increased by

416%

compared with 2014

19 Learning and Development activities

were carried out in 2015



The 2015 Learning and Development activities
focused on

9 main areas

Importance of Learning and Development





The African Union stretches beyond boundaries. It is a globally dispersed team with a common mission. Collaboration is essential.

The Commission plays a pivotal role within the African Union and its unrelenting efforts to pursue integration, development, peace and prosperity across the continent. Hence, that the Commission's mandate is huge and challenges are many.

The Commission operates in a dynamic environment that is characterized by uncertainty and swift socio-political and technological changes. This is coupled with the continued expectation that the AUC upholds its integral values of accountability and transparency.

The only way to address the AU and Africa's increasingly complex and changing needs is to adapt.



Our strategies and processes must develop in such a way that the Commission and other AU organs are able to face new challenges with vision and preparedness.

It was therefore imperative for the African Union to adopt a Learning and Development Strategy that reflects the unique mandate of the AU's organs and one that appropriately prepares the workforce with the skills, capabilities, and competencies needed to ensure a sustainable future.

Hitherto the AU's learning and development plans lacked a properly agreed strategic focus. Managing and implementing the plans have been challenged by fundamental questions: what constitutes learning and development? What are the appropriate L&D activities and for which skill areas? What is the role of technology? and how should the L&D budget be allocated between departments and job categories?

Moving forward, we will be guided by the simple principle that the AU is a learning organization defined by a strong and progressive culture. L&D will no longer be defined as trainings and workshops. Rather, it will be an integrated daily process that supports staff in their on-going efforts to stay effective, relevant, and results-oriented in a shifting environment. Research suggests that adults learn most from colleagues, managers, and on-the-job experiences. Thus, new learning opportunities will reflect these findings and shift focus away from formal classroom trainings. Our strategy will emphasize innovative and local activities such as mentoring, coaching, knowledge-sharing, and staff capacity and skills assessments.



| Leading this new strategy will be top management. While staff members are responsible for their own learning, it is the duty of their managers to support and guide them through the skills and knowledge gaps that need to be filled. Managers will be responsible for setting L&D priorities and building learning into their daily management practices. The Human Resources Divisions will work with managers to empower them to fill the identified knowledge and skills gaps. If correctly applied the AU L&D Strategy will strengthen staff, managers, and leaders at all levels. It will pave the way for a change in culture, a willingness to be bold and work across silos, to take smart risks but always be prudent with the funds. And by empowering current and future leaders across the organization, the AU Strategy will lead to a higher level of commitment to fulfilling the mission of the African Union. |

Skills Assessment Survey for the African Union





A leadership skills assessment survey in French and English was completed by 515 African Union staff members across all AUC Departments, Organs & Representational Offices in May, 2015 with a response rate of 34% (Male/Female response: 58/42%). The survey contained 20 self-report items about employee strengths and weaknesses, and about their hopes and dreams regarding learning and development within the African Union.



Of the Twenty survey questions, Questions 15-20 of the survey items were open-ended questions with text responses.

These qualitative data from these open-ended responses as well as the quantitative data from the closed-ended question are the main data guiding. The five closed-ended questions were:

Q15. What are your hopes and dreams for your own learning and development within the African Union?

Q 16: What would you like to see more of related to learning and development across the African Union?

Q 17: When you think of the future state of the African Union, what changes related to culture do you feel need to occur internally?

Q 18: Describe what you believe are your professional strengths.

Q 19: Describe what you believe or feel are your professional weaknesses.

Q 20: Describe what you believe are obstacles to improving the performance in your job.

| These full text responses are insightful, heartfelt and deserve to be read in full.

The scaled response measures, while interesting in places, in general do not show enough variance to be very meaningful. For example, Q12 asks survey respondents to rate themselves from 1-5 on leadership competencies but nothing statistically significant can be found in the response. However, when paired with Q19: Describe what you believe or feel are your professional weakness respondents' comments were much more diverse and rich to inform the formulation of the L&D Strategy. For this reason the survey analytics team placed a significant emphasis on the qualitative data from the open-ended survey questions. |





The impetus for the Leadership skills survey and the L&D strategy was the desire for change built around the following objectives. It's important to revisit these objectives as a core component of the concluding recommendations.

i) Build a strong Commission culture that fosters a better collaboration, a sense of belonging, and a greater willingness to serve the Commission with sustained dedication.

ii) Design an effective induction program that help new staff to adjust to their new positions, take pride in the organization they have joined, and shorten their learning curve.

iii) Aid staff in their understanding of the AU's role, policies, and challenges so that they may exhibit increased agency within the office and make stronger connections between their work and that of their colleagues.

iv) Facilitate a collaborative and knowledge-sharing environment that enables the breaking down of the silos and working together effectively across organizational boundaries; this allows the Commission and other AU organs to become much more than the sum of their parts.

v) Support change management so that managers can become flexible and versatile leaders who easily adapt to changing situations.

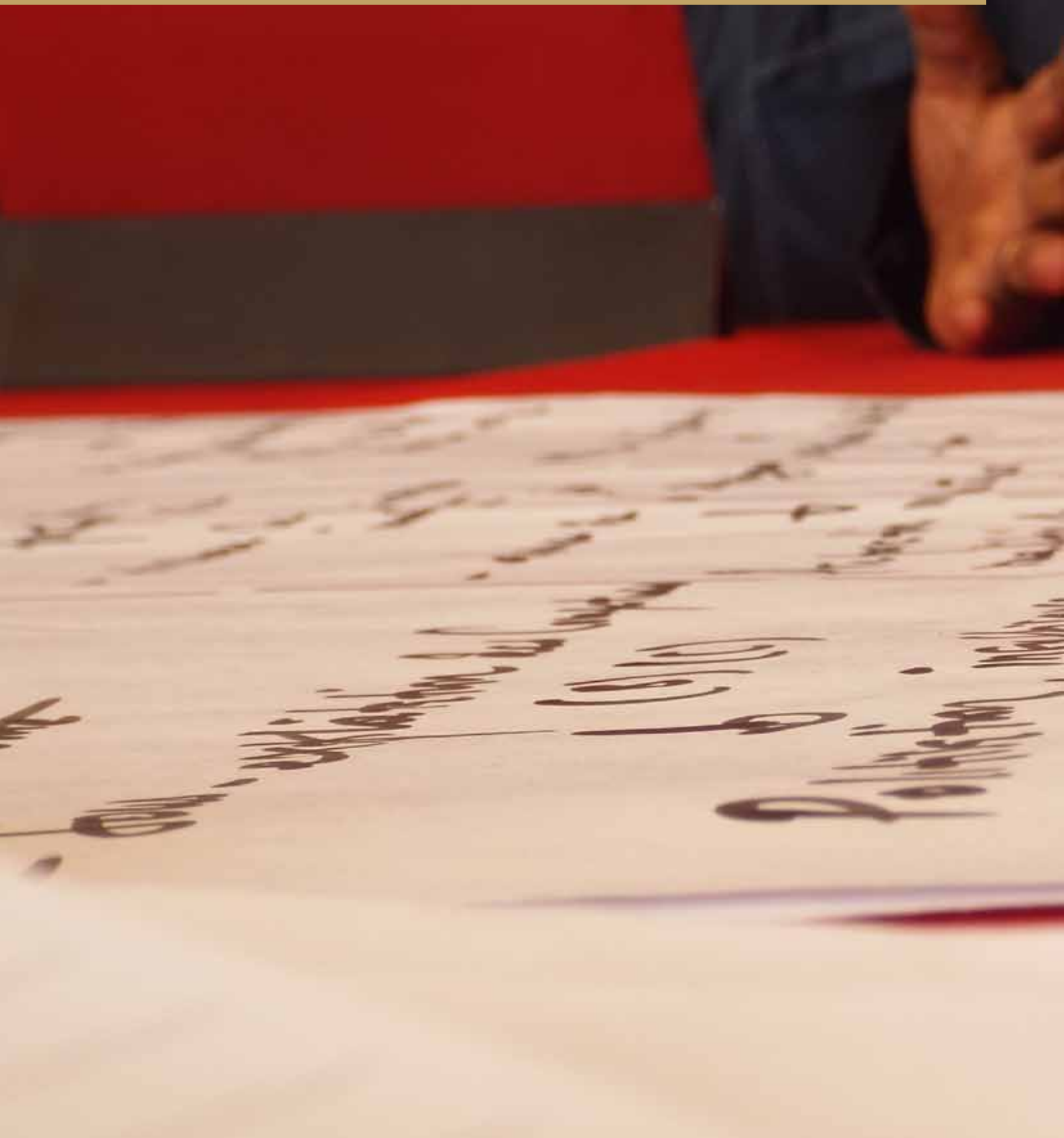
vi) Improve communication between managers, staff, and various AU offices to increase organizational inclusivity, efficiency, and effectiveness.

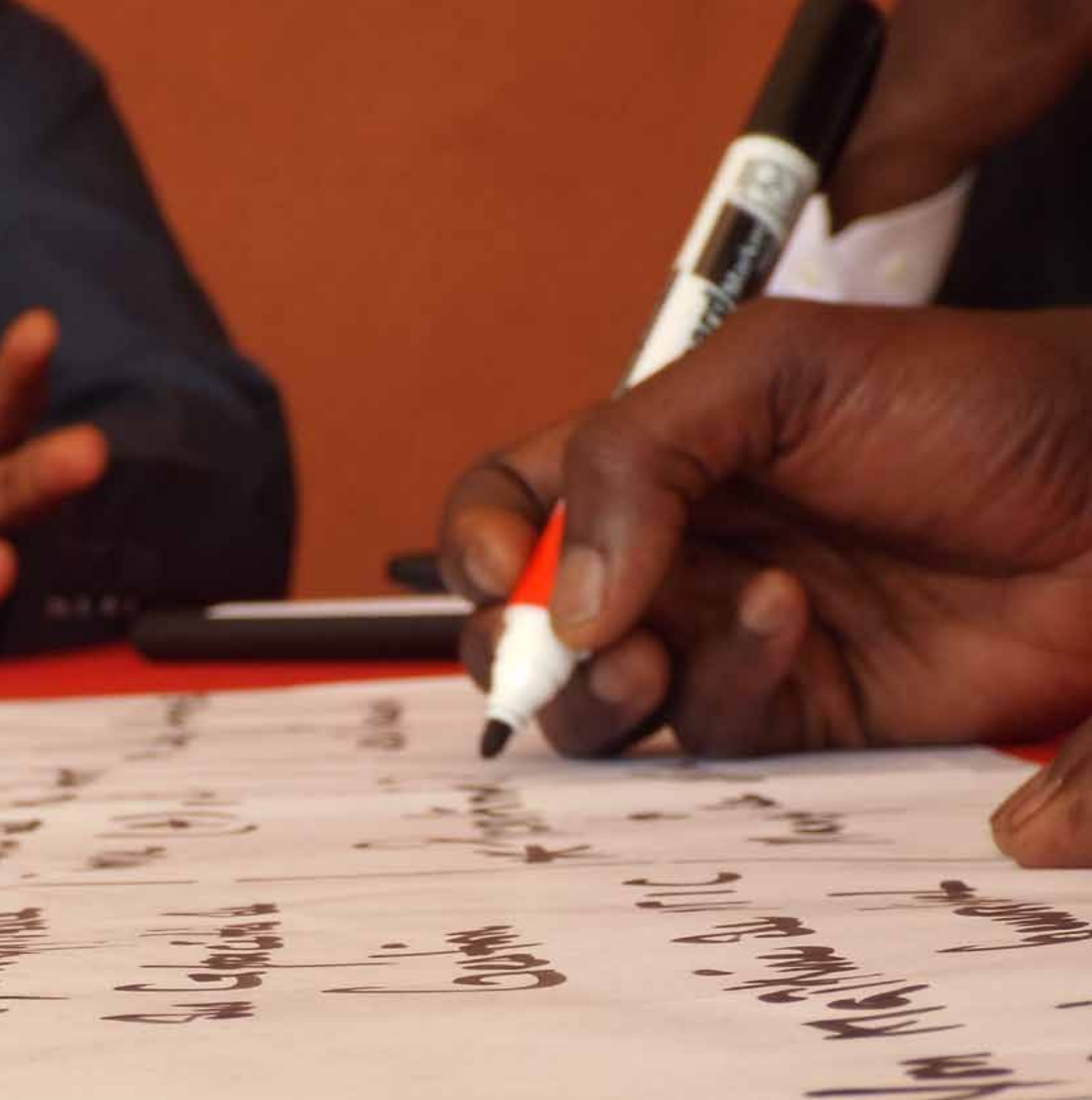
vii) Support leadership and management throughout the AU. In an increasingly complex and dynamic professional setting such as the African Union, managers must be able to relate with colleagues, lead by example, and empower staff to contribute to the best of their ability.

viii) Promote language capacity among AU staff members so that staff have an excellent command of speaking and writing in at least two official languages. All staff should have a least a passive understanding of either English or French.

With these specific objectives in mind, learning and development must be approached broadly, at four levels: Societal, Organizational, Group, and Individual (SOGI). Typically, organizations underemphasize leadership beyond the individual level. The ethos that learning and development belongs to the individual, the group, the organization, and our society, is an empowering notion.

AU 2015 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES





The 2015 Learning and Development activities were developed following the extensive consultation process involving all the staff members of the African Union Commission and organs. As a result of these consultations a training catalogue was developed, taking into account generic and sponsored trainings.

A total of nineteen (19) trainings sessions were conducted and 495 staff members were trained.

GENERIC TRAININGS



The Learning and development Unit conducted several standard training in 2015 which targeted senior staff, middle managers as well as general service staff. These were in the areas of Human resource management, leadership, project management, governance, management and induction training for new staff.

1. Leading a Human Resources Function

This training targeted Human Resources Officer of the African Union as well as support staff within the Human Resources Division. The training was conducted in two sessions on November 9-13 and November 16-20, 2015 in Debre-Zeit, Ethiopia. The training was aimed at equipping HR staff with strong insight into a wide range of human resource functions and to enable them to fulfill their roles of being strategic partners, change agents and employee champions. The training was also provided to enable HR staff to develop a sound understanding of how to deliver HR functions in a manner that adds value to the organization, and to enable them to create and deliver a proactive HRM strategic plan and to become strategic business partners within their organization. The training was attended by thirty eight (38) participants.

2. Training on Good Governance

Targeting staff members handling financial resources and dealing with Partners, this training aimed to introduce the participants to the processes for making and implementing decisions. The training covered the topics such as Ethical conduct in public life; International standards of good governance, finance and audit, procurement and control ; Stakeholder engagement and inclusiveness; Staff engagement and performance management; Strategic planning, business planning and management ; Risk management ; Adherence to the rule of law and Accountability, monitoring and evaluation and reporting. The training was held on November 16-20, 2015 in Debre-Zeit, Ethiopia and targeted thirteen (13) staff members.

3. Driving Results through Innovation

With the objective of developing staff members' ability to drive great ideas through the organization, this training took place on November 23-25, 2015 in Debre-Zeit. The training covered areas of culture organization; problem identification and solution finding techniques, creativity and innovation; self-driven motivation for visionary leadership. A total of eleven (11) participants to the training had the opportunity to learn about new ways of problem solving, new ideas implementation and collaboration.

4. Developing the Strategic Leader

Leadership is an important factor for making an organization successful. Thus this training was developed to equip the staff members with necessary and effective leadership skills to inspire teams. The training targeted middle managers in order to equip them with leadership skills as they aspire to take on senior positions within the African Union. The training was held on November 25-27, 2015 and on 30 November – 02 December 2015 in Debre-Zeit and was attended by twenty four (24) participants.

5. Project Management

This training aimed to improve staff members' skills and knowledge of best practices in managing their projects and was conducted in two sessions on 30 November – 04 December and on December 7-11, 2015 in Debre-Zeit, Ethiopia. The training covered areas of management of procurement, communication, risk, quality, cost, time, scope, stakeholders as well as project integration management and project management framework. A total of Thirty-five (35) staff members attended the training.

6. Management Training for General Service Staff

This training was held in ten sessions of two days and aimed to provide basic management skills for General Service Staff members of the African Union. The training covered topics such as principles of management, team work; customer care; feedback; motivation and navigating change among others. A total of one hundred and ninety six (196) people attended the training.

7. Leadership Program for Senior Officials

This training was organized in order to reinvigorate leadership skills of African Union Senior Officials so

that they can keep up with the dynamic and complex changing environment such as the African Union. There after the participants were tasked to implement transformational projects as part of the learning process. The training was held on December 16-18, 2015 in Lusaka, Zambia this training was attended by twenty three (23) staff members of the African Union.

8. Orientation sessions for Newly Recruited Staff

This year six orientation sessions were conducted for the new staff members of the African Union. Namely these were

- Two (2) staff of the African Union Postal Union in Niamey
- Two(2) Human Resources Officers in Misahel and Misca
- Thirty Seven (37) new staff of the African Union Commission Headquarters
- (5) new Staff of the African Court on Human and People's Rights in Arusha

A total of forty six (45) new staff members of the African Union were formally welcomed and introduced to their organization through the orientation.



SPONSORED TRAININGS

Through its partnership with organizations and governments, the African Union Commission has organized few trainings sponsored by the following governments and Institutions: Government of India, the Government of China, Organization Internationale de la Francophonie, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the University of Loyola. A total of Eighty Three (83) members of staff undergone the various trainings sponsored by the cooperating partners. The summary is presented below;

1. Training sponsored by the Government of India

Advanced Course in Healthcare Technology Management and Clinical Engineering The training was sponsored to allow one (1) staff member of the Medical Services Directorate to update his knowledge and skill in health care technology by providing a practical training in state of art clinical engineering.

2. Training sponsored by Organization Internationale de la Francophonie

a. Intensive Training in French languages.

The training was held on October 18-23, 2015 in Spa, Belgium. The objective of the training was to provide a hands on and practical sessions of interactions in French country. The program consisted of French learning activities and was attended by two (2) staff members of the Commission who hand acquired intermediate proficiency in the French language training offered by the African Union learning and development Unit.

b. Training on Negotiation, Mediation, Leadership and Challenges of International Cooperation As part of its staff capacity building initiatives, the Africa Union Commission in partnership with Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie held one training on Negotiations on October 26-30, 2015 in Debre-Zeit, Ethiopia. This training was attended by twenty (20) officials of the African Union Commission and Francophone diplomats of permanent

representations to the AU involved in the process of bilateral or multilateral negotiations.

The objective was to provide participants with techniques in order to strengthen their negotiations skills in an international and multicultural environment. Twenty eight (28) staff members of the AU commission attended this training. Participants to the training learned about strategic and operational preparation in developing objectives (namely in defining objectives), position interests, alternatives and plans B in negotiations. At the end of the training, they indicated this training was an opportunity to overcome the challenges of coordination before, during and after any negotiation and they recommended such training should be conducted on a regular basis.

c. Immersion Program for the Translators of the African Union Commission. Still as part of the cooperation between the African Union and the Organization de la Francophonie, two translators from the African Union Commission attended a training of trainers in Translation in ESIT (French School of Interpretation and Translation) on November 02-30, 2015 in Paris, France.

3. Training Sponsored by the Swedish International Development Agency

Advanced International Training Program on Peace & Security in Africa (PASA) This program was held from 18 May to 05 June, 2015 and on November 2-13, 2015 respectively in Uppsala University, Sweden and in Durban, South Africa by one Regional Desk Officer and one Program Officer in the Peace and Security Department. The purpose of the training program was to increase the capacity of regional organizations in sub-Saharan Africa to prevent, manage and resolve armed conflicts on the continent through pertaining to peace and security in Africa. The program specifically targeted individuals working at Africa inter-governmental and non-governmental regional organizations focusing on issues relating to peace and security in Africa, and whose work in this field has a regional relevance

and impact. During the training participants dealt with practical knowledge about Peace and Security in Africa with a focus on challenges posed by armed conflicts in various phases, mediation, and conflict management during ongoing armed conflict. The training provided participants with knowledge and tools to develop projects related to peace and security.

4. Trainings Organized the Government of China

a. Seminar on International Business, Negotiation and Competency Building.

This seminar was organized by the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China in order to enhance exchange and cooperation in the public administration sector between China and African countries. Attended by eighteen (18) staff members of the African Union, the seminar covered the following topics : General review of China, China's opening up and Economic Development, International Business Negotiation skills, different strategies for various stages of the international Business Negotiations, Cultural resolution in Business Negotiation, Experience of China's World Trade Accession Negotiations in case of Tariff Concessions and other topics.

b. Seminar on Chinese Culture for African Union Junior Officials

As part of the cooperation

between China and Africa, the 2015 Seminar of Chinese Culture for African Youth was organized by the Ministry of Culture of China, Confucius Institute Headquarters and Tianjin University of Technology and Education. The Seminar took place in Beijing and Tianjin, China from 15th to 29th June 2015. Ten (10) junior officials of the African Union Commission attended the Seminar. The objective of the Seminar was to strengthen the cultural ties and cooperation between China and Africa, improve understanding and exchanges between China and the African Union Commission and deepen the understanding of Chinese culture by African youths.

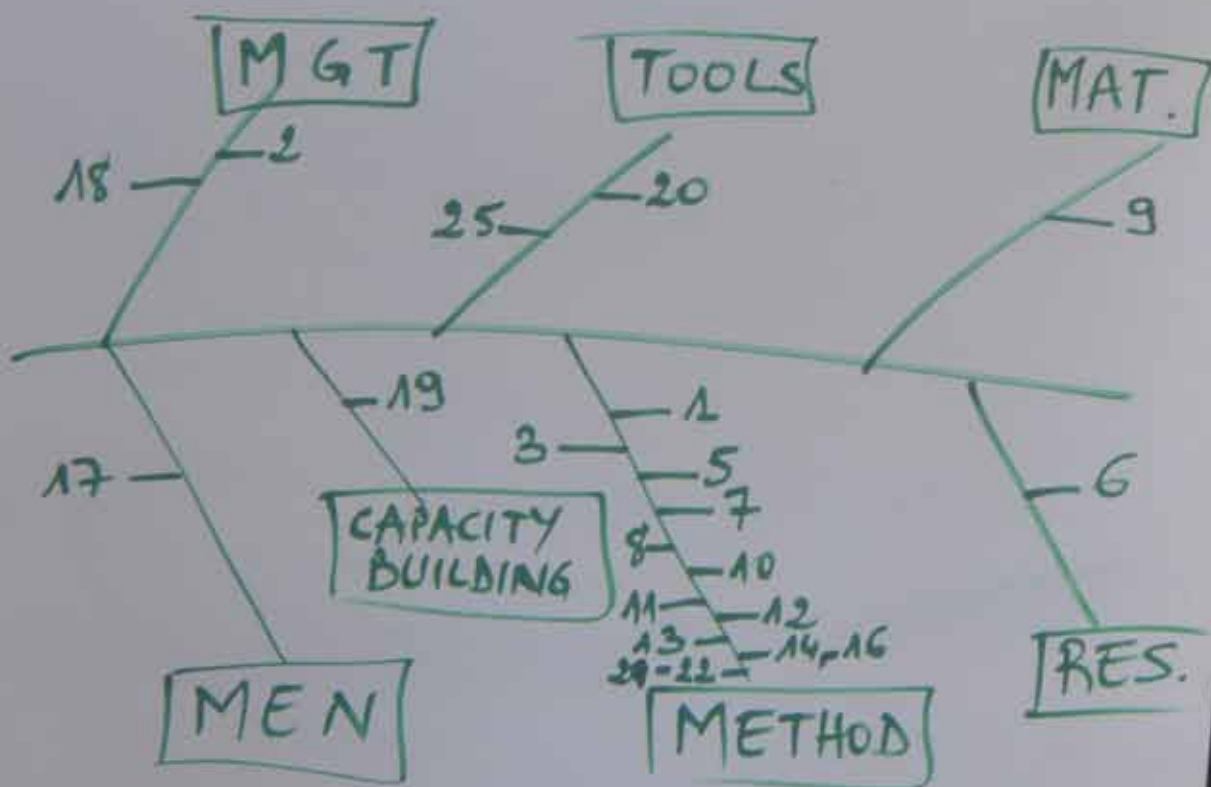
5. Training Sponsored by the University of Loyola

Loyola University LLM Program on Rule of Law for Development. Under the partnership between the Loyola University and the African Union, a scholarship program has been agreed upon for staff members of the African Union to undertake a one year study in the Loyola University Campus in Rome. This year, four (4) staff members including two from the African Union Commission and two others respectively from the NEPAD and the African Court on Human and People's Rights are recipients of the scholarship.





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