

# MAXIMISING GENERATIONAL CAPACITY FOR AN EFFECTIVE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICE

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## ABSTRACT

The South African public service has an ageing workforce that will soon retire with a volume of untapped institutional knowledge that would be a total loss, if it is not retained. The knowledge and capabilities of Baby Boomers (BB), Generation X (Gen X), Generation Y (Gen Y) and Generation Z (Gen Z) are a means to build institutional human resource (HR) capacity. This article examines the extent to which generational competence may enhance the public service HR capacity to provide better services to all South Africans. The findings show that in-organisation education, training and development (ETD) increase institutional capacity. They reveal that the maximisation of generational capacity improves institutional systems and processes. The results show that generational capacity requires renewed mindsets from all generations, and a willingness to collaborate and exchange skills between seniors and juniors. They reveal that the sum of generational competence would increase the public service HR capacity to provide better services to all communities. It is recommended that a culture should be created in which intergenerational competence can be exchanged, which would

enable institutions to retain unique institutional competence and knowledge.

**Keywords:** Generational capacity, public service, training and development, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z.

## INTRODUCTION

The public service has a good mix of race, gender and ethnicity of four generations of employees working alongside each other, namely: BB (1946-1962), Gen X (1965-1979), Gen Y (1981-2000) and Gen Z (2001 to the present) (Salkowitz, 2008:3). In South Africa, the date for Gen Z was effective when it became a democratic state in 1994. It is argued that this date should be 1991, because children born then would not really have been exposed to discrimination. Therefore, Gen Z is also referred to as the Born-Free Generation (BF Gen). Generation is an 'age cohort' that shares unique experiences and teachings in formative years, which develop unique core values and attitudes that are different from other generations (Underwood, 2007:43). Delcampo, Haggerty, Haney and Knippel (2011:1) agree, claiming that generations

are an approximation of the collective set of attitudes, behaviours, ideals, memories and life experiences that affect the work and life of people. Generations have different beliefs, circumstances, value systems and life events (Voller, Blass & Culpin, 2011:107). Therefore, people who are born around the same time will have similar characteristics, because certain social, cultural, economic and technological environments remain relatively constant for periods of time (Sheahan, 2007:2).

The retirement of the BB, in the next few years, will undoubtedly result in a capacity deficit at senior management levels in the public service. It will have an impact on the number of Gen X who are needed to fill senior management positions, because they consist of slightly more than half of the total number of BB (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002:4-6). The demographic shift will make it more difficult for institutions to find skilled employees to fill critical jobs (Andresen & Nowak, 2015:70). Van Dijk (2008:386-388) agrees, stating that the war for talented people has intensified. The ubiquity of technology raises the bar even higher. It means that Gen X will need to have a deep knowledge of technology and communication devices to do their work (Salkowitz, 2008:17). Gen Y and BF Gen, the 'tech-savvy' generations, are the best candidates to fill this need (Delcampo *et al.*, 2011:8-10). However, they lack the necessary leadership and managerial experience and exposure to fill senior management positions. Mentoring, coaching and transferring institutional knowledge by older generations might be a solution (Lancaster & Stillman, 2010:40-42).

According to Andresen and Nowak (2015:70) generational relations is a means to build HR

capacity. Capacity is the ability to maximise output or operate at capacity (Agnes, 1999:216). The former authors claim that demographic changes, an ageing workforce and a declining supply of young employees make it difficult for institutions to remain competitive. The obsolescence of knowledge and competencies adds to the challenge. In South Africa, this is further compounded by past imbalances that excluded the majority of the population from ETD opportunities. To address demographic change means that the HR policies of the public service would have to be revised. It also means that the search for knowledge and competencies should include all generations of employees and focus on a wider range of interests and skills. The authors propose that flexible individualised in-organisation training opportunities allow employees to combine training activities with the workplace processes.

The preamble to the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 (hereafter referred to as the *Constitution*), declares "to free the potential of each person" (RSA, 1996:1), which means that the full potential of each South African must be fully developed for optimal utilisation (s195(1)(h) of the *Constitution*, RSA, 1996:107). Human resource development (HRD) is the means to develop and empower people. It is a process of observation, planning, action and review to manage the cognitive capacities, capabilities and behaviours needed to enable and improve individual, team and institutional performance (Gibb, 2008:6; Noe, 2005:29). Van Dyk, Nel, Van Loedolff and Hassbroek (1997:377) agree, stating that development is a systematic process of ETD by which a person learns and applies knowledge and skills. Gómez-Mejía, Balkin and Cardy

(2010:274) claim that development is an effort to provide employees with the abilities that the institution will need in the future. The *Constitution* asserts that good human resource management (HRM) and the optimal development of human potential (RSA, 1996:107,111) should not only take place in a transformed HR culture, but also in an enabling institutional culture (RSA, 1997a:11-12), which is the responsibility of line managers (RSA, 1997b:10).

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This article explores the extent to which generational competence may enhance the public service HR capacity. The questions that this article attempts to address are: Can intergenerational competence enhance the effectiveness of public institutions? What development interventions are needed to ensure that the generations remain competent? Is the public service able to use its institutional knowledge to facilitate HR capacity? Located in social inquiry, this article is exploratory in nature (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:60, 96). It employs documentary analysis to elicit the social, material, political and theoretical factors (Freeman, deMarrais, Preissle, Roulston, & St. Pierre, 2007:29) in the contextualisation of generations and HRD. Accordingly, the discussion that follows is an attempt at sense-making in order to contribute to the ongoing construction of meaning and influence further interpretation (Weick, 1995; Crotty, 1998) of prevailing realities in the public service. The article argues for a more holistic generational approach to capacity development in the public service. A qualitative research method was used. The article addresses the

contextualisation of generations and HRD, and focuses on the theoretical factors of both. The methodological approach addresses the research problem. The importance of generational capacity for an effective public service would usher in better services to all communities. This study concludes by presenting its findings and conclusions.

## CONTEXTUALISATION OF GENERATIONAL CAPACITY IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

The *Constitution* makes provision for the full development and optimal utilisation of all South Africans (s195(1)(h) of the *Constitution*, RSA, 1996:107). This sentiment is reiterated by section 2(1)(a) of the *Skills Development Act*, No. 97 of 1998, as amended by Act No. 37 of 2008, which endeavours to provide an institutional framework to implement national, sector and workplace strategies to improve the skills of the South African labour force. These strategies should be integrated with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as is envisaged in section 6 and 7 of the *National Qualifications Framework Act*, No. 67 of 2008, to provide for learnerships that lead to recognised occupational qualifications. Section 3(1)(b) of the *Skills Development Levies Act*, No. 9 of 1999 makes provision for the financing of skills development via the employers' contribution of 1% of the payroll to the National Skills Fund.

According to the United Nations (UN) (UN, 1995:5), HR development should be sustained through policies and regulatory mechanisms that underpin broad inter-sectoral support for both the acquisition and the application of knowledge and skills.

It translates into national capacity building, particularly in disciplines and sectors where there are critical shortages of qualified employees. This is underscored by the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) 17.9 (UN, 2015), which endeavours to strengthen capacity building for the revitalisation and implementation of SDGs. South Africa's HRD strategy (2010-2030) focuses on capacity "to adjust speedily to the rapid changes in technology, production, trade and work organisation" (RSA, 2009a:9-10). The strategy also advocates short and medium-term interventions that drive commitment to national economic growth and social cohesion. Similarly, the public service HRM and development strategy, Vision 2015, endeavours to enable public institutions "to ensure that the right people are prepared at the right place, at the right time, and for the right positions to which they can readily contribute" (RSA, 2010a:9).

HRD, in South Africa, has to take cognition of the political, economic, social and wider development agendas. The contribution of each individual to South Africa's development agenda depends on the individual's ability and the institution's HR policies and practices. The productivity of the individual is determined by, among others, his or her technical skills, the extent to which their basic needs are met, their values and social inclusion, and a commitment to advancing the public good (RSA, 2009a:10-11). By enhancing people's skills in order to reach their full potential, HRD serves to improve employees' performance and institutional effectiveness, which, in turn, increases South Africa's economic and social development (RSA, 2009a:7). HRD should adopt a problem-based learning approach, which makes

people more adaptive and responsive. It should also take a more continuous improvement approach to learning, which will create institutional capacity (Baker, 2015:71). Gómez-Mejía, Balkin and Cardy (2010:274) concur, claiming that training provides employees with specific skills or helping them to correct deficiencies in their performance. Beardwell and Holden (2001:279) contend, stating that training supports development and the maintenance of operational capability in employment to enhance effective performance.

Management development is a process of developing and educating selected personnel in the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to manage in future positions (Skinner & Ivancevich, 1992:383). It is a conscious and systematic process to control the development of managerial resources in the institution for the achievement of strategic goals (Beardwell & Holden, 2001:373; Van Dyk *et al.*, 1997:381). Erasmus and Van Dyk (1999:210) concur, claiming that management development intends to develop senior managers to effectively manage the institution's resources, so that its strategic goals are achieved. Management development is the total process of preparing and providing effective managers, and refining their present and future performance (McBeath, 1994:160 in Erasmus & Van Dyk, 1999:224). It not only prepares and trains managers to manage their subordinates and achieve the institution's goals, but it also improves the managers' performance and productivity (Erasmus & Van Dyk, 1999:224). Human resources are the only resource that can use other resources to provide a competitive advantage and institutional effectiveness

(Jackson & Schuler, 2000:xix). Beardwell and Holden (2001:374-376) agree, stating that the quality of an institution's HR represents a critical success factor. Therefore, institutions should develop and empower their managers with the necessary technical, functional and strategic skills, so that they can effectively manage the institution's resources. To achieve this, institutions should invest in the continuous development of their employees (Erasmus & Van Dyk, 1999:210-211).

According to Storey (2001:6-8), HRD increases employees' performance, productivity and the use of technology, as well as the institution's effectiveness. Drucker (1992:81-82) concurs, stating that capital and technology cannot be substituted for people. Capital and technology are factors of production, which is essential for technological advancement and higher productivity. They have become tools of production, which are used to enhance employees' performance and productivity. However, the effectiveness of these tools of production depends on the potential of the people who use them. Greater productivity can, thus, be expected from more employees who are appropriately skilled and qualified than from those who are not (Cook, 1991:4-5).

Different generations have different beliefs, circumstances, value systems and life events (Voller *et al.*, 2011:107). There seems to be a vast increase in the life expectancies of generations, which can be ascribed to different generations working alongside each other in the public sector (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002:5-6). This trend is likely to continue, which means that one generation will influence the life expectations of

another generation. The influence that one generation will exert on another implies that institutions cannot operate as 'business as usual', but would have to adapt their policies to accommodate the expectations of the future workforce. Generations exhibit fundamental differences in attitudes, priorities, values and work styles as a result of their different historical experiences. Therefore, managers and employees should have an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the different generations (Salkowitz, 2008:3). According to Lancaster and Stillman (2002:4), the retirement of the BB will undoubtedly result in a shortage of experienced employees, especially in senior management positions, because there is not a sufficient number of Gen X to take over the reins from the BB, since they are slightly more than half of the total number of the BB. The authors argue that over the next few decades "demand for bright, talented 35 to 45 year olds will increase by 25%, while supply will decrease by 15%" (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002:6). Van Dijk (2008:386-388) agrees, stating that there is a fierce war to attract talented people. This is underscored by the Annual Report (RSA, 2015a:22), which claims that there are 1 761 Gen Y in Senior Management Service positions in the public service.

If the BB retire with a volume of knowledge, experience and competencies, it would be a total loss to public institutions. However, in order to prevent this, public institutions have to undertake a huge knowledge management drive to retain the repository skills (Salkowitz, 2008:11). The demographic shift will make it more difficult for institutions to find skilled employees to fill critical jobs (Andresen & Nowak,

2015:70). The sophisticated technological workplace requires that employees have a deep knowledge of technology and communication devices to professionally execute their duties and responsibilities (Salkowitz, 2008:17). Gen Y and the BF Gen are best qualified for these positions (Delcampo *et al.*, 2011:8-10); however, they lack the necessary experience and exposure, which they may gain through mentoring and coaching by older generations (Lancaster & Stillman, 2010:40-42), as well as the exchange of intergenerational competence.

## **GENERATIONAL CAPACITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

The BB, Gen X and Gen Y display fundamental differences in attitudes, priorities, values and work styles as a result of their different historical experiences. To optimally utilise the capabilities of these generations in the workplace, leaders and managers should have an understanding of the different generations' strengths and weaknesses (Salkowitz, 2008:3). BB create a work environment where participation, a cordial spirit and a fair and level playing field exist for all. They promote civil rights, empowerment and diversity (Zenke, Raines & Filipczak, 2000:21). Their core management competencies are interpersonal relations, team-oriented and command-and-control, and their leadership style is collegial, consensual and benignly despotic (Salkowitz, 2008:58,76-77). The transfer of these skills to Gen X and Y would allow them to continue creating an institutional culture that cares about people and their relationships with others. The retirement of BB, within the next few years, contributes to the urgency of knowledge management.

This generation has a lifetime of experience, insights, knowledge and relationships that contributed to the effectiveness of public institutions. When this knowledge is lost, it can be relearned, but at a great cost (Salkowitz, 2008:85). A loss of institutional knowledge reduces the ability to be innovative, threatens the ability to pursue growth strategies, may give competitors an advantage and, losing specific knowledge at a critical time, increases vulnerability (DeLong, 2004:31). Public institutions have to invest in knowledge management to retain the knowledge of the BB before they retire. Baby Boomers are best suited to mentor Gen Y, because they are their parents (Lancaster & Stillman, 2010:39-43). This provides an opportunity for public institutions to implement mentoring programmes.

Gen X consists of a smaller number than BB, because of the lower birth rate from 1963 to 1980 and the historical circumstances in which they were raised (Salkowitz, 2008:18). This generation is comfortable with change in the workplace, and works to live and does not live to work (Zenke, Raines & Filipczak, 2000:21). Gen X is positive about their personal futures. They have learned to step cautiously in the world and to carefully understand the workplace culture in order to understand institutional politics (Tulgan, 2000:161). The differences between Gen X and Y are largely economic and cultural differences. Gen X grew up in an era when institutions became bankrupt and retrenched employees, which left them to struggle economically to provide for their livelihood. Therefore, they are cynical, independent, distrusting of authority and pragmatic (Salkowitz, 2008:18,53-54). The management

approach of Gen X is individualistic and results-oriented, less attached to processes and impatient with structure (Salkowitz, 2008:58). Gen X provides institutions with a strong combination of pragmatic problem-solving abilities and a deep understanding of technology that may bridge the gap between the ageing and retiring BB and Gen Y (Salkowitz, 2008:131).

Gen Y is less likely to respond to the traditional command-and-control type of management, which is still popular with BB (Salkowitz, 2008:58,76-77). This generation has grown up questioning their parents, and now they're questioning their managers; they are not afraid to challenge the status quo (O'Neil, 2010:3). They are the greatest component of the workforce (Franco, 2013), which makes them the future leaders and managers (Resource Interactive, 2006:1). This generation has grown from 14% of the workforce to 21%, over the past few years, to approximately 80 million in the United States of America, and make up 50% of China's current working-age population (Tulgan & Martin, 2001). In South Africa, they comprise 37% of the population and 58% of the economically active population (EAP) (RSA, 2011b:15). Gen Y comes to the workplace with different skills and are motivated by different things; they think differently about learning and relationships (Voller *et al.*, 2011:107). Among the general characteristics of Gen Y, which are of interest for the workplace, is that they are 'tech-savvy' (Tulgan & Martin, 2001:22); they like to learn, grow, interact and advance (Salkowitz, 2008:106); and they advise parents and collaborate with teachers (Sheahan, 2007:82-83). Technology has changed the way institutions conduct their

business and how employees interact with one another (Delcampo *et al.*, 2011:53). Gen Y's connectedness has not only allowed them to work from anywhere and at any time, but has also broadened their world view and diversity (Tyler, 2007; Salkowitz, 2008:108). Research conducted by Lancaster & Stillman (2010:228) showed that 82% of respondents indicated that Gen Y is well-prepared for collaboration at work. This is a challenge for Gen X who are accustomed to controlling their assignments and working independently; and for BB who like to display their abilities and accomplishments. Gen Y lives for, and embraces, change. They want to make a contribution to the effectiveness of the institution from their inception at the workplace. They want to contribute to, and be part of, a greater event (Lancaster & Stillman, 2010:86-87). Gen Y has high expectations for fulfilment and success, because they are confident, honest, demanding and vociferous (Voller *et al.*, 2011:113). They are not only the most educated generation, but also street-smart (Sheahan, 2007:7). Street-smart means that one sees things the way they really are; and one knows whom to trust and whom to respect (Sheahan, 2007:7).

## **MAXIMISING CAPACITY**

Why maximise capacity? The *Constitution* asserts that public administration must adhere to the efficient, economic and effective use of resources (s195(1)(b)). This is endorsed by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), which strives to become a capable, efficient, effective, responsive and accountable public service (RSA, 2015a:8). However, the Public Service Commission (PSC) report (RSA,

2010b:ii,vii) states that: most managers are not adequately competent in HR; there is a shortage of skills, high vacancy rates due to scarce skills and high staff turnover at the professional levels; and training requirements of SMS and capacity building need urgent attention (RSA, 2010b:5). The lack of adequate HR severely constrains socio-economic growth and development in South Africa (RSA, 2009a:9). The introduction of SMS, in 2001, attracted managers from the private sector which improved retention, but capacity development, professionalism and commitment need attention (RSA, 2007:2). These challenges may be ascribed to the competition among public institutions for the same scarce skills (RSA, 2010b:vii; Van Dijk, 2008:386-387). The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI), projected a decline in South Africa's Life Expectancy Index between 1992 and 2005. In 2005 and 2013, it was 0.700 and 0.658, respectively, which can be ascribed to the impact of HIV/AIDS (UN, 2007b; RSA, 2014:159,161). The retirement of BB, during the 2014/2015 financial year, created vacancies that need to be filled by competent MMS candidates. In the PSC, 56 (20%) employees left, of which five (9%) retired (RSA, 2015b:90), and in the Department of Defence (DoD) 3 331 (4.23%) employees left, of which 839 (25.19%) retired (RSA, 2015c:110).

Economic competitiveness between institutions, nationally and globally, for scarce skills and resources is intensifying. This requires a workforce that is not only flexible, but also has the capacity to adjust speedily to rapid technological development, production and trade (RSA, 2009c:8). Ziderman (1997:352) agrees, claiming that

improved ETD and health are not only regarded exclusively as benefits stemming from economic growth and rising incomes, but also as investments in human capital that make sustained economic growth possible. Investment in ETD translates to positive economic benefits for the institution and society (Seyda & Werner (2012), cited in Andresen & Nowak, 2015:70). Trained and competent employees use their competencies, effort and personality to improve their performance, which enhances the institutions' effectiveness (Cornelius, 2001: 1-2). HR provides institutions with a strong economic incentive to make optimal use of its workforce (Campbell & Campbell, 1990:97-98). This is underscored by the UN (1995:3), which states that HRD increases productivity, enhances competitiveness and supports economic growth. Drucker (1992:81-82) concurs, advocating that people are the only resource that uses other resources, such as capital and technology, to produce consumable products. Technological innovation, economic globalisation and demographic changes compel institutions to invest in employee development, which gives them a strategic competitive advantage (Andresen & Nowak, 2015:70). Baker (2015:61) agrees, stating that the complexity of problems that employees face and the ever-changing landscape is placing greater pressure and demand on people to think quickly and differently; therefore employee development is essential.

Learning and development allows managers and subordinates to enter into a partnership for the employees' development in exchange for a commitment to lifelong learning (Baker, 2015:81). Being a lifelong learner reinforces the concept of action learning and meaningful

work, which goes beyond mutual benefits for employees and institutions. Employees enjoy employability, the development of new skills, greater job satisfaction and more autonomy to play an active role in the institution's decision-making processes. The institution receives greater flexibility, increased market share, a collaborative environment, responsiveness and manoeuvrability in the marketplace (Baker, 2015:83). To increase the competence of public employees, the National School of Government (NSG), in collaboration with South African universities, has entered into a partnership to train public employees at different levels of management. The government has to continue investing in the development of its workforce, so that they are able to keep abreast of functional development in their respective disciplines as well as technological advancements (Haruna & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2015:37-38).

The labour force survey, for 2001 to 2007, showed an increase of 20 000 per annum in the number of people holding a qualification in the manufacturing, engineering and technology sectors (RSA, 2009c:15-16). During 2014/2015, DPSA appointed 24 141 interns, learners and artisan trainees in the public service (RSA, 2015a:45). It also intended to provide work experience by supporting the admission of 50 000 youths and unemployed graduate interns for internship, artisan and learnership opportunities by March 2015 (RSA, 2015a:57). Furthermore, it endeavoured to reduce the average vacancy rate in the public service from 14.16% to 10% (RSA, 2015a:58-59). It has exceeded its internal training target of 60% by 5% by training 190 employees (RSA, 2015a:41). The PSC trained 149

(54.19%) employees of a workforce of 275; of which 69 (46.30%) were MMS (PSC, 2015b:94). The DoD trained 42 428 (53.91%) employees of a workforce of 78 707, of which 3 019 (7.12%) were MMS (RSA, 2015c:133-134).

The DoD transformed and revitalised its reserve forces, so that they were able to fulfil their support role of reinforcing the SANDF during internal exercises and peace support missions. During 2014/2015, the SANDF called up approximately 14 600 of the approximately 22 600 active Reserves available to safeguard the borders and complement the Regular Force (RSA, 2015c:5). The Military Skills Development System (MSDS) (youth development) is a service system that supports the DoD's HR renewal strategy and the feeder system to ensure the SANDF's rejuvenation and capacity. During 2014/2015, 3 889 MSDS members were appointed (RSA, 2015c:5). During 2014/2015 the DoD also assisted the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform by training 2 008 candidates for the National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) (RSA, 2015c:106).

The DoD's revived ETD includes the implementation of the Security and Defence Studies Programme (SDSP) at the South African National Defence College on 12 January 2015. The Programme is accredited at Master's degree level, or South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Level 9, and replaced the former Executive National Security Programme (ENSP). The Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme (JSCSP) is accredited at Honours degree level, or SAQA Level 8, and a new learning path for Officers was approved. These qualifications enhance

the lifelong learning culture and capacity of military professionalism (RSA, 2015c:107). This capacity (force preparation and force employment) allows the SANDF to provide and employ defence capabilities, which include an operational capability to conduct all operations, including joint, interdepartmental and multinational military exercises (RSA, 2015c:22). This capacity also allows the SANDF to provide mission-ready defence capabilities, of which its most critical defence capability, its HR, is combat-ready (state of health, fitness and concurrent health assessment) (RSA, 2015c:14), which includes a skilled and capable workforce (RSA, 2015c:170).

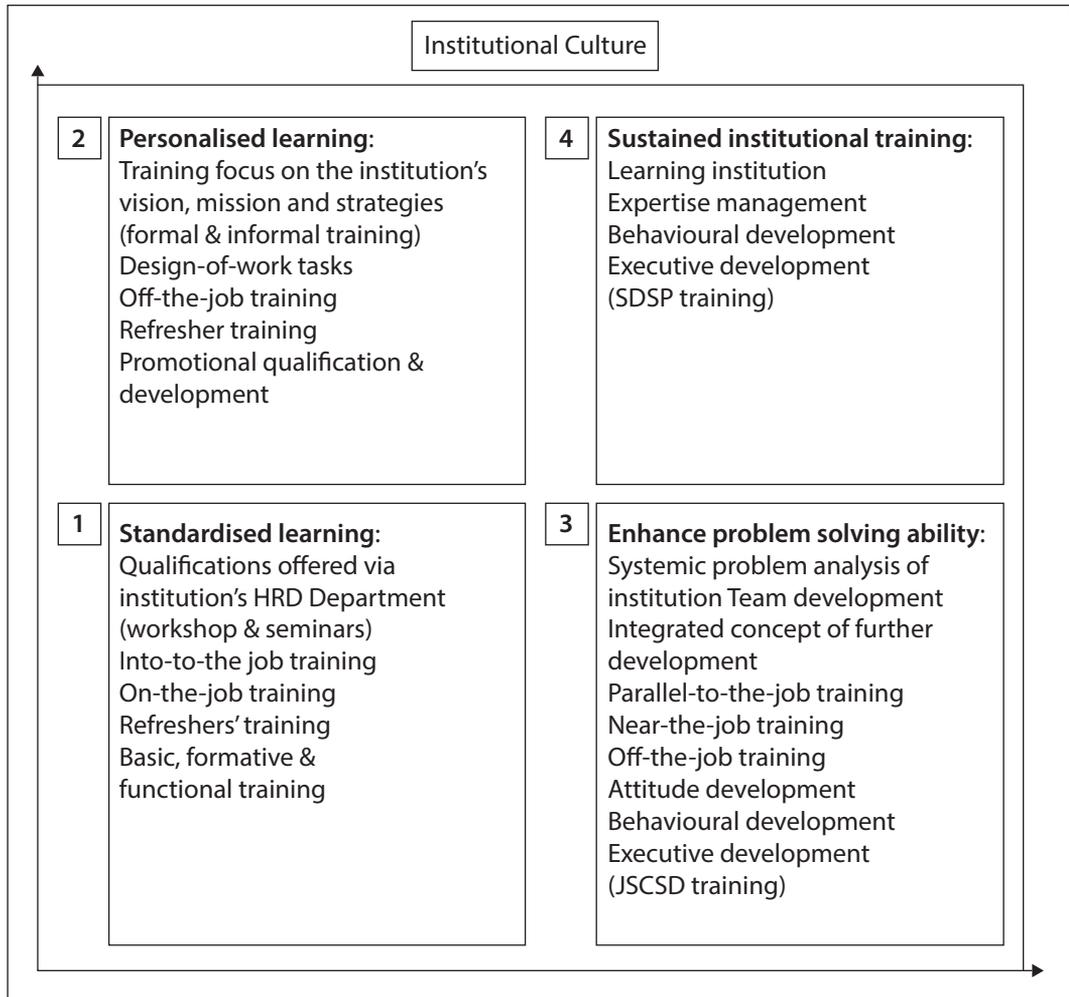
The SANDF increases its capacity by using the capability and competence achievement models to enhance the ETD of its workforce. These models assisted in determining the accreditation of military qualifications at SAQA and NQF. The SANDF has specialised training schools for the different arms of service (AoS) and corps. The AoS have colleges where junior and senior command and staff training takes place. MMS are exposed to tactical, operational and strategic competence, which is commensurate with the levels of war (Maxwell, 1997), to ensure that they are functionally competent and able to operate at SMS (DoD, 1997:95, in Kahn, 2005:254-258). The SANDF also uses assessment centres and succession planning to select and develop MMS for appointment to SMS (Van Wyk, 1998:2.1, in Kahn, 2005:251-252). According to the learning path model, MMS must comply with the military requirements and possess an Honours degree or Postgraduate diploma. MMS do not only play a crucial role in the management cadre of public institutions,

but are the backbone of the institutions' present and future success, because they provide leadership and functional training to their subordinates and ensure that government's policies are implemented and the institutions' strategic goals are achieved. They also contribute to the future development of the public service by coaching and mentoring Gen Y and BF Gen (Haruna & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2015:35). For further promotion, MMS must complete the JSCSP and SDSP (DoD, 2001:3-5). Promotion in the SANDF is not only linked to specific institutional requirements, but also formal recognition that a candidate is properly developed and empowered to perform the functions and accept the responsibilities on a higher level rank (DoD, 2001:3). This means that soldiers are developed not only to operate within their respective functional disciplines, but also within the broader structure of the SANDF, irrespective of their discipline (DoD, 2001:3-5).

## **A MODEL FOR MAXIMISING GENERATIONAL CAPACITY**

Figures 1 and 2, on the following pages, reveal that renewed minds are needed to create an organisational culture for maximising generational capacity. It requires a transformation of the public service to create an enabling institutional culture (RSA, 1997a:11-12), which can be done by transformational leaders (Kahn & Naidoo, 2011:86-88). The *Batho Pele* principles provide guidelines for establishing an organisational culture (RSA, 1997); however, it will take years for a young democratic public service to create an inclusive culture (Andrews & Mead, 2009:20-21). An organisation's culture represents

**FIGURE 1: Building institutional capacity**



Source: Adapted from Ottmayer, Künzli, Käte and Häfliger (2010) in Andresen and Nowak (2015:76)

the personality of an institution, which is a reflection of the relationship between the employees and employer (Baker, 2015:66). The relationship is the manner in which management and subordinates relate to one another (Baker, 2015:71).

Figure 1, above, shows how the authors adapted the work of Conradie (1983), cited in Ottmayer, Künzli, Käte & Häfliger (2010) in

Andresen & Nowak (2015:76), and merged it with the DoD's ETD. *Standardised learning*: includes into-the-job and on-the-job training. Informal training takes place at work, it is less cost-intensive than formal and non-formal training, and there are neither direct nor indirect costs, because training takes place at work and employees do not miss working hours (Andresen & Nowak, 2015:75). *Personalised learning*: personal development

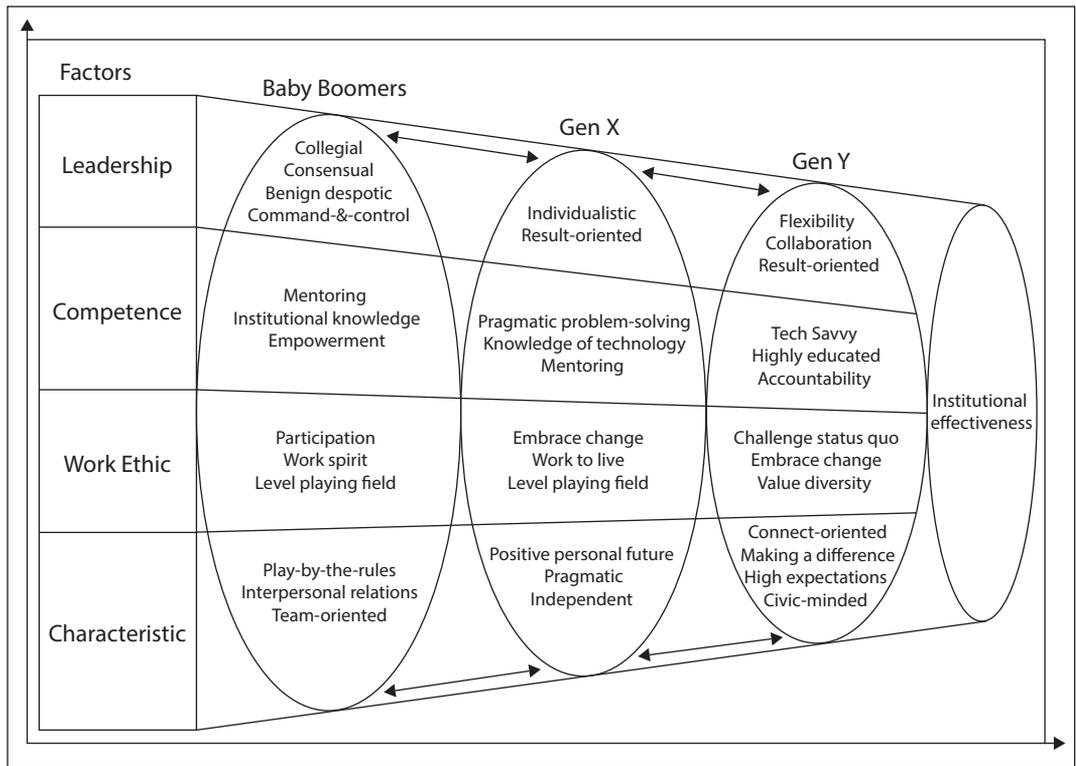
programmes, which take place according to the employee's personal development plan (PDP). This may also include design-of-work tasks or on-the-job training. *Enhanced problem-solving ability*: can take place in all three types of work-related learning (formal, informal and non-formal). Informal training normally takes place at work, while formal and non-formal training takes place away from the workplace. Off-the-job training allows employees to interact and exchange ideas, knowledge and information with employees from other institutions. It also extends their network and broadens their respective world view (Beardwell & Holden, 2001:331-333). Parallel-to-the-job training (mentoring programmes, coaching, counselling and work-life-balance) provides excellent opportunities for intergenerational competence capacity. It allows the different generations to interact and share their experiences and competencies (Andresen & Nowak, 2015:72-73). *Sustained institutional training*: public institutions should create an institutional culture where continuous employee development can take place and where their expertise can be optimally utilised (Baker, 2015:66-68). Transformational leaders are capable of both (Reggio & Murphy, 2002:106-107).

Andresen and Nowak (2015:75) propose four categories to enhance institutional capacity as is illustrated in Figure 1 on the previous page. *Refreshers training*: managers and leaders should keep abreast of new developments in their respective disciplines as well as with technological innovation and development. Retraining is also necessary when there are job changes and the introduction of new work methods, processes and programmes. *Promotion*

*qualification and development*: to attain the required competencies and undergo further training in order to function at the next higher level of management. Candidates for such appointments are identified via the career and succession planning processes. *Attitude development*: normally takes place when institutions experience organisational change. This assists in changing the attitude of employees, so that they are able to embrace a new institutional culture. *Behavioural development*: intends to transform employees' behaviour in order to facilitate changes in their social behaviour, which is aligned to the institution's culture. This plays an important role in embedding new institutional norms and traditions as well as improving leadership qualities.

Figure 2, on the following page, illustrates how intergenerational competence can maximise the institution's HR capacity. The transfer of BB skills to younger generations would allow them to continue promoting an institutional culture that is people and relationship friendly (Salkowitz, 2008:58,76-77). BB would not only share their leadership and managerial experience with younger generations, but also mentor Gen Y to ensure that institutional knowledge is transferred (Lancaster & Stillman, 2010:39-43). Gen X can share their pragmatic problem-solving skills with Gen Y (Salkowitz, 2008:131) and also mentor them (Carlson, 2008:29-30). Both Gen X and Y can teach BB to become technologically efficient, which would enable BB to become more effective in doing their work (Salkowitz, 2008:77). Gen Y's connectedness and technological knowledge enable them to share it with older generations, which allows them to work from anywhere and at any

**FIGURE 2: Generational competence capacity**



Source: Authors

time (Tyler, 2007; Salkowitz, 2008:108). Gen Y's desire for work-life-balance is an antidote for Gen X's workaholic nature. This generation's collaborative ability, desire for change and diversity would enable them to work in a transformed workplace (Salkowitz, 2008:189). The strength of one generation may compensate for the weakness of another. The sum total of generational competence would not only enhance the effectiveness of the public service, but also change the landscape of service delivery.

## CONCLUSION

The research reveals that the maximisation of generational capacity not only requires

renewed mindsets from all generations, but also a willingness to collaborate and exchange knowledge between seniors and juniors, as well as acknowledging people's abilities and celebrating individual and institutional achievements. Therefore, the sum total of generational competence would increase the public service HR capacity to provide better services to all South Africans. It is suggested that the institution's culture should make provision for an intergenerational competence exchange, which would enable institutions to retain unique institutional competence and knowledge. It would also provide an enabling environment where the BF Gen is exposed to a multitude of competences.

The study shows that HRD not only enhances generational capacity, but it is also directly connected to sustained economic growth, because it increases employees' performance and the institutions' effectiveness, which results in better service delivery to all citizens. It is advocated that the in-organisation development model of Conradie (1983), in Andresen and Nowak (2015), be adopted and adapted to suit the institutions' culture. The research

reveals that Gen Y possesses unique competencies, which is a competitive advantage, because public institutions cannot compete with the private sector for the small pool of talented Gen Y. It allows them to contribute to the institution's effectiveness, which translates into better service delivery for all communities. It is recommended that Gen Y be mentored and involved in all management levels to increase their skills.

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