

**TECHNICAL PAPER FOR THE
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**HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT:
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM'S ADMINISTRATIVE
SERVICE (BAS)**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Human resource is no doubt a country's most important asset. This is especially true for Brunei Darussalam, where this resource is very limited, as her total population is currently only around 300,000. The development of the resource has, therefore, consistently been the main thrust of the Government's policy as spelt out clearly in both the Sixth (1990-1995) and the Seventh (1996-2000) National Development Plans.

1.2 The Brunei Darussalam's Administrative Service's human resource development (HRD) programme has been chosen for this paper because it clearly illustrates how Brunei Darussalam develops and nurtures her scarce human resource by incorporating the training programme into the scheme of service. The scheme is designed to develop managers and leaders in the Civil Service who are expected to play vital roles in ensuring the Government's integrity, as well as the nation's competitiveness and effectiveness as a global player in the next millennium.

2. HRD: THE GOVERNMENT'S VISION

2.1 The vision and aspirations of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan, as the Head of State and the Head of Government, on human resource development, are very clear. In His Majesty's titah (speech) recorded in the Seventh Five-Year (1996-2000) National Development Plan's book, His Majesty stressed on the need for continuous attention be given to human resource development, especially in education and training, in order to produce skilled, capable, dedicated and professional human resource to support the country's economic diversification programme. Similarly, His Majesty's titahs over the years have repeatedly emphasised on the prudent management of the human resource and the continuous improvement of its quality.

2.2 The Seventh Five-Year National Development Plan spelt out the Government's commitment to producing skilled, disciplined, well educated and motivated human resource to sustain the country's economic development. The plan, among others, aims to accelerate human resource development so as to meet the country's demand of an increasingly sophisticated economy.

2.3 The working population of Brunei Darussalam is currently around 130,000. The Civil Service employs around 40,000 or 30.8% of these, taking into account both those on the permanent and temporary appointments. Brunei Darussalam is also still heavily dependent on foreign workers, which constitute about 41% of the labour force.

2.4 To gradually equip the country with professionals and quality work force, the Government has been investing heavily on education. In fact, the drive to

educate the population started way back in the 50s. Education is given free of charge in government schools. The literacy rate is currently 90% compared to 80% a decade ago. There are at the moment around 77,000 students in Brunei schools, ranging from pre-school to upper secondary. About 3,000 are pursuing tertiary education in the University of Brunei Darussalam and other higher institutions in the country at the diploma, degree and post-graduate levels. There are also about 2,000 enrolling in vocational schools annually. On top of the above, the Government also sends top students overseas to acquire university qualifications in a range of specialised disciplines. Brunei Darussalam will continuously need skilled, high quality, versatile and adaptable work force to meet the needs of the non-oil sector of the economy which is actively being developed under the country's economic diversification programme.

2.5 Similarly, to continuously upgrade the quality of the Civil Service, the Government also allocates substantial budget annually for in-service education. Eligible civil servants are sponsored to pursue a host of courses either locally or overseas. The in-service training awards are normally based on organizational needs. However, opportunities to pursue academic courses may also be given to a civil servant as a reward for a consistently excellent service.

3. HRD: THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTMENT VIS A VIS OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

3.1 The Public Service Department (PSD) is the central personnel agency responsible in ensuring the effectiveness, efficiency and excellence of the human resource in the Civil Service. The management of HRD programmes across the Civil Service are however shared between PSD, ministries and departments. The PSD handles local management courses for supervisors, middle and top managements, and overseas courses of duration exceeding 30 days. Ministries handle specialised overseas courses of duration not exceeding 30 days. Departments provide in-house courses for their professional and support staff.

3.2 The Civil Service Institute (CSI) is the training arm of the PSD. The institute offers a range of management courses at its campus in Kampong Rimba. It aspires to help the Civil Service develop a culture that incorporates corporate, entrepreneurial and positive ethical values. Its main areas of thrust are Management, Business Administration, Human Resource Management, Information Technology, Management Science and work ethics.

3.3 The Staffing and Training Administration Section of the PSD is tasked with the administration of other in-service training courses either locally or overseas whose duration exceeds 30 days. The section vets applications and makes recommendation to the in-Service Training Committee, which is the central committee approving all in-service training applications of the abovementioned category. For more equitable distribution of the annual training quota, each ministry is allocated with a quota that has to be further distributed to eligible officers in departments under it. HRD Committees are formed in all ministries to help administer and vet applications. Short-listed candidates are conveyed to the PSD for further vetting and onward recommendation to the In-Service Training Committee.

3.4 Training courses whose duration does not exceed 30 days are decentralised to the respective ministries. Their approvals are granted by the respective ministers. To help ensure that each of these HRD Committees has common interpretation on the provisions of the prescribed in-service training regulations and adheres to them, the PSD organises regular meetings with them.

3.5 The implementation of the HRD programme of the BAS officers is, however, the sole responsibility of the PSD.

3.6 The types of in-service training schemes that may be offered to the civil servants, including the BAS officers, are as in Appendix A. The PSD issues an in-service training circular annually giving guidelines and conditions for the awards of the schemes.

4. THE BRUNEI DARUSSALAM'S ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE (BAS) AND ITS CHANGING ROLES

4.1. The Brunei Darussalam's Administrative Service (BAS) scheme of service is the oldest scheme of service in Brunei Darussalam's civil service. The officers appointed into the scheme are known as Administrative Officers (AOs). The scheme was originally designed during the British administration's days to enable the government to recruit locals to help ensure, among others, the Government's policies did not infringe the local customs. It also helped the Government to deal with sensitive local issues effectively without causing discord between the administration and the people. The administrative officers were also trained as magistrates to deal with minor court cases, as there were probably only very few locals then who were qualified legal officers. Over the years, however, its functions have evolved to suit prevailing circumstances. Thus, at present, although the government's administration is fully run by local officers, the administrative service is still relevant and is an essential component of the Civil Service. This is because as generalists, they are expected to have a wider perspective on issues. They are, in particular, expected to be conversant with Brunei Darussalam's Constitution, the country's laws and regulations, the General Orders, the Financial Regulations, the departmental circulars pertaining to the civil service, socio-economic policies of the government, local customs, and modern management techniques. Quite a number of senior AOs are currently holding key positions in government, such as Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, ambassadors, Heads of Department, and principal officers in ministries and departments. They formulate, analyse and implement policies; manage departments, finances, and staff; and perform other administrative functions in ministries or departments. Hence, they perform the functions of leaders, managers, "think tanks", and administrators in government, depending on their placements and seniority.

4.2 Evidently, the roles and responsibilities of the BAS officers have over the years changed as results of, among others, changes in the political system, and the adoption of new management systems and Brunei Darussalam's active participation in world affairs as an independent sovereign nation.

4.3 Likewise, the scheme of service has necessarily undergone several modifications and the existing one has been effective since 1 April 1992, and to date is considered to be the most comprehensive. One of its main features is the training programme built into the scheme of service to ensure its systematic implementation and relevance. It is now the benchmark of other schemes of service.

5. THE BAS HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (HRD) PROGRAMME

5.1 Appendix B on page 17 is the summary of the BAS's HRD programme. As will be seen, each programme is designed to meet the task's requirement of each

level of positions in the scheme. The complexity of the AOs' responsibility naturally increases as they progress to higher positions. Hence, the aim of the training programme is to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills so as to enable them perform their tasks more effectively and efficiently.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOVERNMENT SYSTEM

5.2 Induction courses for new graduates are conducted yearly by the Civil Service Institute (CSI). This is one of the mechanisms that support the PSD's quest in scouting for the right talents for the BAS.

SELECTION OF BAS CANDIDATES - recruiting the best

5.3 Recruitment to this premier service is competitive. Apart from having a good honours university degree, the candidates must also show leadership potentials, communication skills, good personality traits and character. These are observable when they are sent to the Outward Bound School (OBS). The PSD short-list likely candidates. The short-listed candidates are then interviewed by a panel comprising very senior officers to further ascertain their suitability for recruitment to the service. These series of activities constitute the first phase of the training programme.

BAS EXAMINATION - a requirement for confirmation in the post

5.4 Successful candidates are appointed as Trainee Administrative Officers (trainees). The trainees are required to sit for and pass the BAS Examination before they are confirmed as Administrative Officers Grade 1 (A01). The examination consists of the following papers:

- Brunei Darussalam's Constitution;
- The General Orders and Service Regulations;
- The Financial Regulation; and
- Brunei Darussalam's General Laws

Trainees who fail the examination after three sittings shall have their appointment terminated.

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION AND DOMESTIC FOCUS

5.5 To equip them with basic administrative foundation, the trainees undergo a series of talks and courses covering, among others, the following areas:

- Brunei customs and tradition
- Brunei Darussalam's Constitution
- General Orders and Service Regulations
- Financial Regulations
- Accounting and Finance
- Information Technology
- Organizational Behaviour
- Human Resource Management and Development
- Management and Supervisory skills
- Economics and Economic Development
- Project Management

- Public Management
- Public Relations
- Quality and productivity.

5.6 Apart from the above basic management courses, they are also sent for placements at relevant ministries and departments to provide them with the exposure and first hand experience in basic administrative work, personnel management, financial management, and in dealing with the public. Their placement at the District Offices in the country's four districts is, however, considered most significant because it, among others, exposes them to the varied cultures and problems of the local people. Each district has its own characteristics that must be understood in order to manage it effectively. This exposure should particularly be useful to those who are to be posted at our diplomatic missions overseas. It helps them gain wider knowledge on Brunei Darussalam and the people, whose interests they are going to protect. Furthermore, it is also expected that once an officer knows how to adjust his working styles in the varied local environments, he should have no problem in adjusting to the working environments overseas. Hence, the training at this stage is more to equip them with the knowledge, skills and understanding on the nature of the government machinery and to improve their public relations skills.

MANAGEMENT AND REGIONAL FOCUS

5.7 Having graduated from trainees to A01S, their management potentials are developed through various management courses. It is at this stage in their career that they basically deal with day-to-day administrative matters and general office administration.

5.8 The scheme also provides them with the opportunity to see other management practices and how other Civil Services perform in the region through study tour programmes. With such programmes, it is hoped that the officers are able to learn and understand more closely the structure and system of other governments, establish contacts and at the same time develop and strengthen networking and co-operation with their counterparts.

POLICY ANALYSIS

5.9 As BAS officers progress to become Assistant Heads of Department (AHDS), they become the "third person" in the organisation. They are now expected to be able to analyse policies and review organisations. At this stage, they are given the opportunity to pursue a Masters degree, normally "management" in nature, such as Masters in Business Administration (MBA), Masters in Public Administration (MPA), Masters in Public Policy (MPP), and Masters of Science in Management (MSc Management) in well-established universities. This gives the AHDs the opportunity to undergo a structured training programme on Policy analysis and a more in-depth understanding of current management techniques and practices. Being in their mid-career, they are expected to be able to relate the theories that they learn in the university with real working situations that they had gone through previously.

5.10 They are also required to present two papers, one of which should be a "civil service review" project that they have conducted in their organisation. This exercise is designed to test the officers' report writing, planning and analytical skills. This is one of the requirements for their promotion to Deputy Heads of Department (DHDs).

5.11 As Deputy Head of Department (DHDs), the scope of their roles and duties are wider and more complex. They are expected to spend more time managing their organisations. They must be conversant with advanced organisational development issues, human resource management, financial management, and be more innovative and resourceful.

5.12 Those without the Masters degree are further required to undergo an Upper Middle Management programme at the University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD). The programme covers the following subjects:

- The Study of Public Policy;
- Public Policy Analysis; Special Issues in Public Policy and Administration.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND GLOBAL FOCUS

5.13 The next stage in the career progression of BAS officers are as Heads of Department (HODS). As the top men in their organisation, they are expected to take the leadership role providing strategic vision to their subordinates and mobilising their resources towards achieving the vision. At the same time, they are also expected to keep abreast with regional and international affairs, especially those pertaining to their organisations. They now join their respective Permanent secretaries in formulating policies for their ministry.

5.14 To help them update themselves with the latest development in management thinking and practices, HODs are sent to top universities to attend courses such as Advanced Management Development Program and the likes. The frequency and the actual courses to be attended by the HODs are determined by the Director-General of the PSD in consultation with the HODs' respective Permanent Secretary and the HODS themselves.

5.15 This concludes the BAS training programme as stipulated in the scheme of service. With the training and exposure that they have had, it is hoped that by now they would have been transformed into more dynamic and resourceful managers and leaders capable of effectively steering their organizations towards excellence.

5.16 The HODS next promotions to more senior positions will depend, among others, on their performance, talents and abilities.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Brunei Darussalam gained full independence on 1 January 1984. As an independent sovereign nation, albeit young, she has to shoulder both her domestic and external obligations. This naturally requires capable human resource. Given the size of the country's population, Brunei Darussalam is, therefore, committed to enhancing the rapid development of her human resource so as to enable her to meet the enormous tasks and challenges ahead. Among the areas that Brunei Darussalam is actively developing are leadership and managerial competencies. This is pursued by incorporating the training scheme into the scheme of service of the country's Administrative Service. The process starts from recruiting the best among new graduates. The programme then develops in accordance with the officers' career development from implementers to innovators, from administrators to leaders at both ends of the scheme. Brunei

Darussalam hopes to enter the 21st century well prepared and with confidence. Hitherto, with efforts by all sectors in the country and with the help from her counterparts around the globe, Brunei Darussalam has been able to stand on her own and has made significant contributions to the world affairs. Brunei Darussalam is determined to progress further in all fields while at the same time keep her own identity.

References:

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Appendix A

TYPES OF IN-SERVICE SCHEMES IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM'S CIVIL SERVICE

	Type of Scheme	Description
I.	Full in-service training (overseas)	This scheme is normally offered to civil servants who are either attending short-courses or long academic courses which are the requirement of their individual scheme of services. The award of the scheme is also subject to attainment of a prescribed level of performance. The ISTC is responsible for the award. Recipients receive a monthly salary, subsistence allowance, accommodation allowance, air fare and other course related expenses.
2.	Study leave (overseas)	The scheme is normally awarded to civil servants who want to attend academic courses which are not prescribed by their schemes' of service, but which are considered essential for the long term human resource planning of the civil service. Recipients receive a monthly salary, air fare and course related expenses.
3.	Leave without pay (overseas)	This scheme is given to civil servants who want to pursue academic courses, which is not prescribed in their scheme of service and whose absence will not affect the efficiency of their organisations. Recipients only receive a subsistence allowance and course related expenses.
4.	Short courses (overseas)	This scheme is basically a full-in service training programme but the courses' duration is limited to not more than 30 days each.
5.	Local in-service training	Civil servants who are allowed to attend academic courses in the University Brunei Darussalam and other higher learning institutions are given either study leave or leave without pay.
6.	Local training run by the Civil Service Institute	Civil servants who are required to attend courses at the CSI are considered as if they are working.
7.	Local training run in-house by ministries or departments	Civil servants who are required to attend courses run by their respective ministry or department are also considered as if they are working.

Legend:

ISTC = The In-Service Training Committee

CSI = The Civil Service Institute, PSD.

Appendix B
 BAS HRD PROGRAMME

	Positions	Training Scheme
	HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	Advanced Management Development Programme or equivalent - at an overseas institution (3 months)
	DEPUTY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	A Masters Degree (Full in-service). or Upper Middle Management Development Programme at UBD for I semester (4 months)
	ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	A Masters Degree (Full in-service). or Prepare 2 project papers, one of them on the "Civil Service Review"
	ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER GRADE 1	Short Courses (Basic Management) Study Visits to ASEAN countries
	TRAINEE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	BAS Preparatory Course (I month) BAS Examination
	FRESH GRADUATE	Outward Bound School (Leadership Skills) Interview and assessment Introductory course on Government System